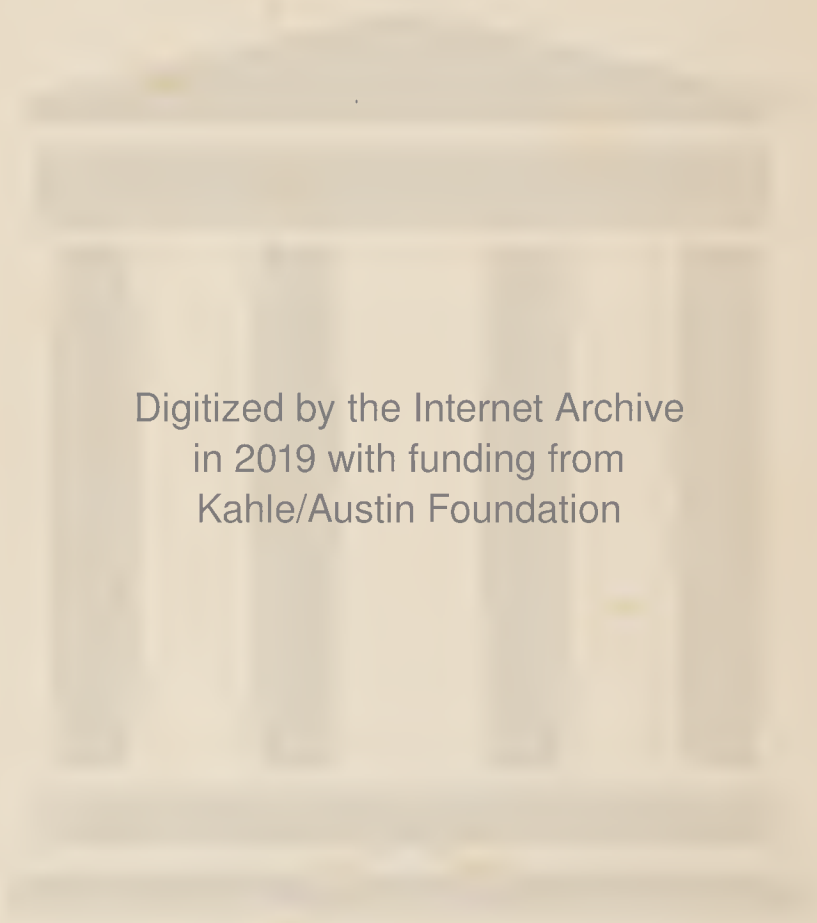


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STILL MORE PREJUDICE

By the same Author.

**PASTICHE AND PREJUDICE
MORE PREJUDICE**

STILL MORE PREJUDICE

BY
A. B. WALKLEY



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DUSE

By all who care for the finer art of the stage Duse's death must be felt as an intimate bereavement. For herself, maybe, she welcomed death with Leopardi's greeting,

Bella Morte, pietosa
Tu sola al mondo dei terreni affanni.

for her sorrows were great : a ceaseless sorrow of her woman's heart, into which only the heartless would now pry, and the sorrow, too, of a frustrated ambition. She won the love of all "well-born souls," but she asked for more. She moved the great cosmopolitan crowd, and the great crowd, with its little Italian and its appetite for coarser fare than she would stoop to offer, remained only half-conquered. She stood for spiritual beauty, was the rarest exemplar of that—indeed, compelled it to enter into many parts not worthy of it that snapped under the strain. The great crowd often missed the beauty, but was always disconcerted by the snap. They explained their discomfiture, after the fashion of crowds, by a *cliché* ; Duse, they said, might be a great actress, but she was, after all, an actress "of temperament." She was not, like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in ; her temperament

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moulded her parts instead of running, jelly-like, into their mould. That was the proffered explanation.

It is true she was no mere mime. Just as there are writers who can faithfully reproduce every style under the sun, but have no style of their own, so there are actors—"Protean" they used to be called—who pride themselves on concealing their individuality under innumerable disguises. The fact is, they have no individuality to conceal. Such vogue as still survives for your Protean actor rests upon the fallacy, now become flyblown, that art is imitation. Acting can imitate only external things, gestures, accents, and looks. What makes it an art is the spirit that informs it, and is expressed through it. When the actor attempts to express what is not in his own spirit he ceases to be an artist, and becomes (what, indeed, the Greeks called him) a hypocrite—he presents effects divorced from causes.

Duse, an absolute artist if ever there was one, expressed herself, her own soul, and the beauty of her acting lay in the perfection of her expression. People talked of her sincerity, her simplicity, her air of being the part rather than acting it; but that was only another way of saying that expression had been perfectly achieved. It was not, and could not be, achieved when her part was in any degree discordant with her temperament.

Hers was a rich temperament, but rich rather in depth and intensity than in width of range, so that she too often had to play discordant parts. She was

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luckiest when her parts were actually designed for her, as happened with many of D'Annunzio's plays. Who can forget her Silvia Settala in *La Gioconda*, the mother deserted by her sculptor-lover after she has sacrificed her hands (the *belle mani* for which Duse was famous) in saving his statue? One can still hear the poor maimed creature envying the peasant girl's rough, brown hands, "Sono felici le tue mani"—hands that can touch the leaves and the flowers, and the earth and water, and the stones and the children, and animals and all innocent things. One can still see her grimace of agony when her child asks in vain to be taken in her arms.

In *Francesca da Rimini*, again, she was a thing of haunting beauty, plastic and musical. The linked sweetness long drawn out of D'Annunzio's verse fell on your ear like the notes of a Stradivarius under the bow of a Kreisler. In the scene of the lovers reading together—the inevitable Dantean scene—it was wonderful to watch the changes of her face and the "passions de l'amour" following fast upon one another there.

Duse had naturally a pensive face, with an anxious line in her brow—what people call a "melancholy" face—and with its mouth drawn down at the corners it was the typical tragic mask. Yet it was in a piece of light-hearted gaiety, *La Locandiera* of Goldoni, that she found her greatest triumph. Her Mirandolina, the little Florentine innkeeper who, for the honour of her outraged sex, tames the

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woman-hating Cavaliere and brings him to her feet, was the most bewitching coquette imaginable, but a coquette in pure childlike fun, a coquette without a trace of the elaborate artifice, the leering archness, that the stage is used to exhibit. "Mirandolina," they say to her, "voi siete una gran donna; voi avete l'abilità di condur gli uomini dove volete." And "gran donna" is what one always had to call Duse. She was "gran donna" by temperament, doing everything in the grand style—with strange consequences for some of her parts. Neither the heroine of *La Dame aux Camélias* nor the heroine of *Heimat* is in the author's conception a "gran donna," but Duse raised both the courtesan and the prima donna to that dignity, making each of them spiritually beautiful, and so, in fact, misrepresenting each.

For she could touch nothing without ennobling it, without giving it a high distinction, some last grace of the exquisite. Romantic characters—and both Marguerite Gautier and Magda belong essentially to romance—will bear this glorification better than figures that are mere copies of reality. Such a copy is Paula Tanqueray, and in this part you saw Duse tearing her author's facts to tatters. Paula was a "fast" woman promoted from a "shy" villa to Surrey respectability and bored to exasperation by the promotion—a bare character of prose which Duse robed gorgeously with poetry. The pert, under-bred woman who "adores fruit, especially

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when it is expensive," became an exotic orchidaceous creature with the enigmatic smile of a Leonardo portrait, and tones in her voice that echoed the music of the spheres. For a Paula primly kissing Aubrey "good night" you had a Vivien beguiling Merlin. The ex-Mrs. Jarman figured as some beautiful strange monster let loose among mortal men. When she was joyous there were "harps in the air," when sad, her weeping was like a convulsion of nature. She had rapid tragic moments that seemed like acted readings in Dante. It was a miraculous achievement in the art of "making little fishes talk like big whales"—a wonderful thing to see, a kaleidoscopic show of varying emotions each with its little thrill for the onlooker of pity, or terror, or delight. But it was never Mrs. Tanqueray.

That is not to say that her art failed in truth. It could be nothing but the truth, for it was the perfect expression of her imaginative self. But it often failed of coincidence with her author's truth. Acting, worthy of the name, is never, as some people suppose, merely interpretative, merely executive; it is always creative, too. Just as no two men have ever seen the same picture, so no two actors have ever played the same Hamlet. Shakespeare's Hamlet has never been seen of man; every Hamlet that has ever been seen has been a new work of art, modelled on Shakespeare's, but never coinciding with it, because the actor's soul is not Shakespeare's, but his own.

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And so the world of art is strewn with palimpsests, new spiritual expressions imposed upon the old. The value of the new work of art will depend upon what soul there is in the actor to express even more than upon the part, the old work of art, beneath. Thus Duse would not seldom give you a palimpsest much finer than the original, and your pleasure or displeasure depended upon what you were "out" for. If you were out for a slavishly accurate "copy" you gnashed your teeth; if you were out for the emotions inspired by the spectacle of an ideal soul expressing itself poignantly, richly, delicately—in a word, by the spectacle of spiritual beauty—you fell at Duse's feet. There will always be the two different demands, and always, therefore, two views about Duse's place in the world of art. But those of us who fell under her spell know what we have lost in her: our sovereign lady of the theatre, our unique and exquisite joy.

SARAH

WE say Sarah as our forefathers said Rachel. It is a tribute to greatness, as you call a pope Innocent or a king George. There have been greater actresses, but Sarah was without peer as a great institution. Her prestige was world-wide and, as her countrymen say, legendary. Too much of it was bluff and clap-trap—pet panthers, coffins to sleep in, and the rest of the Sarah caprices—but these things the legend exaggerated; they were the touch of romance which popular imagination expects from great institutions. Doubtless, however, she was capricious by nature. There is corroboration of this in Daudet's sketch of her girlhood in one of his novels. There is further evidence in her behaviour during the visit of the Comédie Française to London in 1879, when she was no longer a girl. It is from this year that her prestige dates. There was a sort of rivalry between her and Croizette. The London public took sides and Sarah became first favourite. Soon afterwards she became the institution that we have all seen and admired, or, at any rate, marvelled at.

It was not done single-handed, but was a collaboration between Sarah and Sardou. The author wrote, or rather, manufactured, plays "round" the actress.

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These were destined chiefly for foreign consumption ; showing violent situations that would be understood without knowing the language and exhibiting the actress in her celebrated postures, accompanied by her celebrated "golden" tones or by her no less celebrated shriek. She coiled sinuously round Ipanoff in *Fédora*, shrieked when Scarpia was torturing Mario in *La Tosca*, lolled voluptuously in *Cléopâtre* and *Théodora*, and languorously in *Gismonda*. A foreigner could follow all this as well as any Frenchman, who, indeed, would be more likely to detect the flimsiness of the play which served as a background to the attitudes. But the actress did create, with Sardou's help, a new type—the embodiment of Oriental exoticism ; the strange, chimæric idol-woman ; something not in nature, a nightmarish exaggeration, the supreme of artifice.

This type and Sarah became one. She wandered all over the world with it, and no wonder that it became in the end somewhat travel-stained. Perhaps the author, too, wearied of supplying perpetually the same article of exportation. At any rate, by the time *Gismonda* was reached it was generally felt that the type had become a bore. This is the penalty of repeating the same attitudes before all the nations of the earth. Another is the inevitable development of mannerisms or tricks. For example, Sarah had three favourite styles of delivery, each of which became a trick. First, there was a rhythmical chant, or intoning, a melody of "linked sweetness

SARAH

long drawn out." This was delightful when she played Phèdre or Andromaque ; it was the very delivery for the smooth, sweet verse of Racine ; delightful, again, when she played the Queen in *Ruy Blas*. By the time she had got to *Théodora* it had become burlesque. Second, there was the metallic hammering out of her words ; the most notable use of *staccato* I think the stage has ever heard. Of this the great instance was the passage in Act III. of *La Dame aux Camélias*, in which Marguerite describes to Armand the seamy side of her life : the passage ending with " ruine, honte, mensonge." (I can hear those three words ringing out, as I write, like the strokes of a bell.) Well, this beautiful grace of elocution became in time an obviously calculated " effect," too, a mere trick. Third, there was her rapid patter. The words tumbled out, one after the other, at such a helter-skelter pace that one was simply left to gather their sense from the context or the accompanying gesture. This went very well in the earlier acts of *Frou-Frou*, say, where, moreover, it was artistically right because it illustrated the character. But when you heard the same trick in the first act of *La Tosca* it seemed to you merely irritating gabble.

When at last Sarah got away from the idol-woman she made her greatest success in what our forefathers called a " breeches part," the hero of Rostand's *L'Ailgon*. That was a notable achievement for a woman already over sixty. Since she lost her leg,

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the only part I have seen her play was the eponymous hero of *Daniel*, and that was wonderful, too, though more wonderful still was the intense emotion of the whole house while waiting for the curtain to go up on the great actress, who, for the majority, must have been merely a name.

I have spoken of her caprices, but really only by hearsay, because they were a part of the famous "legend." It is, however, a duty to speak of people as one finds them, and I am bound to say that Mme. Bernhardt (one naturally goes back to that, when one is speaking of the woman in private life), as I knew her off the stage, showed no caprice. She struck me as a sensible, shrewd, kind-hearted woman, with a keen sense of humour, and modest, for all her fame.

ANATOLE FRANCE

LET others speak of the greatness of Anatole France, and measure his importance in our modern civilization ; I can only think of him as a source of exquisite pleasure, as a munificent contributor to the joy of living. In a world of noisy propagandism, of dogmas confidently asserted and violently attacked but seldom thought out, he quietly shook his head and smiled and bade us be content with understanding. " L'homme," he said, " est né pour comprendre." Not necessarily, however, through the intelligence. " L'intelligence a quelque grâce, une charme, je l'avoue. Elle plait en quelques personnes. Rare comme elle est aujourd'hui et retirée dans un petit nombre d'hommes méprisés, elle demeure innocente. Mais il ne faut pas s'y tromper : elle est contraire au génie de l'espèce." And he concludes that ignorance and error are necessities of life like water and bread, and that the intelligence, in society, must be excessively rare and feeble to remain inoffensive. There are even necessary lies. " Je suis médecin," says Dr. Trublet in " Histoire Comique," " je tiens boutique de mensonges. Je soulage, je console. Peut-on consoler et soulager sans mentir ? " It would be a shame to translate that simple limpid

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prose. Clearness was a religion with him. Science, he said, may exact from us attentive thought. Art has no such right. It is naturally useless and charming. Its function is to please; other it has none. Yes, the function of Anatole France's art is to please. One thinks of him as a source of exquisite pleasure.

He pleased by his irony—never a malicious irony, slightly unctuous, with a whiff of the seminary still about it, in “*Jérôme Coignard*,” almost Rabelaisian in “*L’Île des Pingouins*,” cutting sheer through the mass of partisan pretence in “*Les Dieux ont soif*.” He was the great modern master of irony, more potent even than Voltaire's, substituting as it did for Voltaire's savagery a wise and catholic indulgence. He pleased by his erudition, scornful of pedantry, worn lightly like a feather. And he pleased—for one must be frank and face the puritans—by his voluptuousness. “*Volupté*” is one of his pet words. He loved not only the inside of books but the smooth, caressable surface of their morocco bindings. He hated ascetism (Paphnuce, the monk in “*Thaïs*,” is the most detestable of his creations) and warmed to beauty in all forms, not excluding the fleshly. Women abound in his books, and they are generally no better than they should be. Who can forget Cathérine (in “*La Reine Pédauque*”) in her burgundy-drenched chemise? Or Mme. de Gromance, whose walk suggested to M. Bergeret “*la douceur cruelle que donne aux âmes voluptueuses la beauté des formes vivantes*”? By and by this

ANATOLE FRANCE

“cruel sweetness” led his voluptuous soul to the verge of indiscretion. There are chapters in “*La Révolte des Anges*” which, but for the saving grace of their irony, would seem more appropriate to the younger Crébillon.

And that reminds me of the only time I had the privilege of meeting him. It was just before the war at a little supper given in his honour in the “Dome” of His Majesty’s by Sir Herbert Tree. Many people in London must have the pleasantest recollections of suppers in the “Dome” given by that perfect host, and on this occasion he excelled himself. But he was nervous about his French and asked another gentleman present to propose the great man’s health for him. Poor gentleman! Imagine his agony, if you can! To address Anatole France in his own language! Somehow or other, however, the trembling wretch stammered through something or other, and Anatole France, explaining that he had never made a “speech” in his life, replied with a delightfully informal talk. It was something to hear that delicious style, fresh from the mint, as it were, or rather in the very process of minting; but I remember still better the vision of Tree giving an impersonation of the ideal listener, interjecting little appreciative murmurs and now and then an ejaculation of rapture—a marvellous feat of histrionic virtuosity when you remember that the listener had begun by deploring his imperfect acquaintance with the French language. But Sir Herbert, as I have said,

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was always a perfect host. Before the great man sat down he stretched out his hand to thank the gentleman who had proposed his health. But the proposer was a person of wholly insignificant appearance and, indeed, of no account whatever, and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Anatole France failed to remember him and warmly grasped the hand of his immediate neighbour instead—who happened to be a handsome peer (immortalized by Sargent in a famous picture) and who certainly *looked* more like the man who ought to have proposed the toast than the miserable object who actually did.

Nor was that the only amusing incident. Up sprang a certain foreign Ambassador, and began an address to Anatole France thus :—" Vous êtes divinement sensuel." " Chut ! " interrupted the great man in mock-dismay. " Vous gâterez le banquet !"—*i.e.*, the official banquet which was to be given in London on the following night in his honour.

Well, I hope my allusion to the voluptuousness of Anatole France will not " spoil the feast " for readers impervious to the charms of Mme. de Gromance's walk or those of the wine-drenched Cathérine. There is enough in him for all tastes—and his legends of early Christian martyrs and saints are as exquisite as anything he did. For, as he said himself, " C'est manquer du sens de l'harmonie de traiter sans pitié ce qui est pieux." Nevertheless, take him for all in all, I think we shall have to cherish his memory as the greatest of literary Pagans.

THE OXFORD JANE AUSTEN

IT is the habit of Oxford men to be proud of Oxford—and perhaps, other people may think, a little unduly puffed up about it—but I venture to doubt whether, at any rate in their undergraduate days, they are proud enough of the Clarendon Press. It is not, as a rule, until they have gone down and begun their battle with an unacademic world, cheerfully indifferent to such questions as scholarly editing and the authenticity of texts, that they begin to appreciate that noble institution. There are other University presses, highly meritorious, and I intend no disrespect to them, but am only observing a natural piety when I rejoice over the achievements of the Clarendon Press. Its publications have a dignity, an authority, a finality of their own. When it reprints and edits an English classic it seems to consecrate the author's fame more effectually than a monument in St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. Was there ever such a Boswell as Dr. Birkbeck Hill's great edition, published by the Clarendon Press so long ago, I think, as 1887? Is there any likelihood of that being superseded? And now the Clarendon Press pays splendid tribute to the immortal memory of another great English classic by publishing, in

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five volumes, with notes and illustrations, "The Novels of Jane Austen, the Text based on Collation of the Early Editions by R. W. Chapman."

How proud Miss Austen would have been to see these five volumes ! Her early MSS., as we all know, were left about in drawers, unfinished, then fished out again, rewritten, and sent on trial to some publisher who didn't publish them. When she did get into print, she was a careless proof-reader, and the numerous misprints in her text have provided puzzles some of which remain unsolved to the present day. And here she is, treated with as much erudition and ingenious conjecture as though she were an Æschylus or a Sophocles ! That her works should have run through so many editions, within the past hundred years, each dolefully repeating, sometimes gratuitously swelling, the errors of the last, attests at once the carelessness of publishers and the placid indifference of generations of readers, to whom a story, even though it be Miss Austen's, is just a story *comme une autre*.

Mr. Chapman has been able to profit by the suggestions of many ingenious commentators, from Lord Macaulay to Sir Frank MacKinnon, K.C., whose help he particularly acknowledges ; and many of the conjectures are, like the White Knight's helmet, of his own invention. It would be impertinent, especially after what is necessarily but a hasty glance at the new edition, to offer any suggestions at variance with these. Yet I cannot help wishing

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that the editor had given more weight to the textual criticism of Dr. Verrall, whose studies in Austenian misprints were profound and whose emendations were often brilliant. There is one, in particular, about William Price's leave (in "Mansfield Park"), derived from a close study of the Admiralty papers of the period, which is as good as anything Verrall did for Euripides. I do not think Mr. Chapman even alludes to it.

Not the least valuable of his contributions is his Appendix on Miss Austen's vocabulary. Dictionaries (and these only big ones) give changed shades of meaning after the changes have become established. Here we see them actually in the making; are able to construct the curve of change, as it were, instead of merely noting its points of inflexion. Take the word *character*. Over and above the ordinary sense in which this is now used, there is the special sense in speaking of a domestic servant's character—reputation, description of character. In Jane Austen the secondary sense was the more frequent—*e.g.*, "a family whom Emma well knew by character" ("Emma") and "Maria had destroyed her own character" ("Mansfield Park"). It is very interesting to note language thus undergoing a process of continuous change instead of *per saltum* as in the dictionaries. Mr. Chapman (helped, it seems, by the late Dr. Henry Bradley) has compiled a wonderful list of these minute changes, which make Miss Austen's language, while, roughly speaking,

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modern enough, still, to an attentive ear, essentially different from the speech of to-day. Nevertheless, I venture to suggest that Mr. Chapman, like all dealers in mint and anise and cummin, is inclined to overdo it. Thus *ascertain* (generally used in the now obsolete sense of *make certain, verify*), he says, "never means merely *find out*." *Never*, said Miss Crawford to Edmund Bertram, in the wood at Sotherton, is a black word. It is a black word here. I turn to "Pride and Prejudice," and on p. 9 I read : — "They (the ladies) had the advantage of ascertaining from an upper window, that he (Mr. Bingley) wore a blue coat and rode a black horse." *Capital*, says Mr. Chapman, means *of the first importance*, as, indeed, it should to-day—*e.g.*, "Such a capital piece of Mansfield news" ("Mansfield Park") does not mean, as it would in the debased usage of to-day, good news. Yet you find the modern usage in "Pride and Prejudice" (p. 37) : " 'That is capital,' added her sister, and they both laughed heartily" (at the fact that one of the Bennet uncles was a London tradesman). Again, according to Mr. Chapman, "*discourse* is the regular word for *conversation* (which is seldom found)." Casually turning over the pages of "Pride and Prejudice," I have noted *conversation* eleven times, in far more regular use, in fact, than *discourse*. (See pp. 35, 40, 54, 55, 72, 173, 175, 245, 267, 269, and 309.)

But these are trifles. My comments are only tributes of respect to an edition which Miss Austen

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herself would have called (and we should not) eminently "respectable." The numerous illustrations to the work do really illustrate it; there are no fancy-pictures; all are "documents," contemporary prints, fashion-plates, or maps. You have a print of Portman Square as it actually was when Mrs. Jennings lived just off it, a map of the Bath which Catherine Morland and Anne Elliot knew, and the figures and postures of the dances which Emma Woodhouse and Mr. Knightley danced. As you see, I have merely been able to skim the new edition, and my mouth waters to have my fill of the rich feast it promises.

AUNT JANE

HALIFAX wrote of Charles II. that his "inelinations of love" were "with as little mixture of the seraphic part as ever a man had." For this kind of love see the Restoration drama *passim* and the novels, especially the ladies' novels, of our own day. For the seraphic part of love, presented as though it were the whole, see the novels of Jane Austen. It would be a delusion to suppose that she was a seraph herself. She had her eyes open. She knew the world. As her letters show, she could relish a bit of scandal like any other woman and make passing reference of the coolest sort to the mistresses kept by wicked peers in neighbouring country houses. We "glimpse," as the Americans say, a similarly wicked Admiral in "Mansfield Park." That is to say, though she did not know, she knew *of*, unseraphic love. But, like a true artist, she would only describe what she really knew, what was part and parcel of her very self. Hence love in her books is a social fact or a psychological fragment. Thus a "match" concerns the principals only a little more than their family and friends and, indeed, the whole village circle. Ladies "attach" their swains. Gentlemen

AUNT JANE

“esteem” their sweethearts—though “sweetheart” is too warm a word to be admitted to the Austenian vocabulary. “Falling in love” was a new and quasi-intellectual interest in life (*i.e.*, woman’s life, the only life Miss Austen attempts any inside view of), like acrostics, plain flounces all round, or the difficulty of the new quadrilles as compared with the old cotillon.

Well, no true lovers of Jane Austen, who are the flower of the population and the salt of the earth, would ever dream of raising a word of objection to all this. It is a very pleasant picture of life as it might be and, doubtless, for many worthy people, actually is. After all, Charles II.’s “inclinations to love” were naturally very different from those of a maiden lady and a parson’s daughter a century and a half later, and if her view was nonsense, then, as Charles himself said of something else, “her nonsense suits our nonsense.” What her view was is a clear inference not only from her novels but from her letters, and particularly from the letters she wrote to a young lady who supposed herself to be “in love,” her niece Fanny Knight. These letters, five in all, were printed as a separate group in the edition of Miss Austen’s correspondence published by Lord Brabourne (the niece’s son) in 1884, and now the Clarendon Press, by permission of the present lord, has printed them in facsimile in a slender quarto volume. She wrote a beautiful hand, flowing, compact, regular, perfectly legible, and did not dis-

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dain the feminine privilege of eccentric spelling. "Irresistible" she writes "irresistable," and "capriccio" "capprizio." She used up every bit of space, addressed the letter on the back, and it cost her correspondent 7*d.* or 8*d.* on delivery—and cheap, you think, at the price!

Miss Fanny, it appears, didn't quite know whether she was "in love" or not, and consulted Aunt Jane about it. You can guess with what delight, what unction, what subtlety, she fulfilled the task of consultant on so congenial a topic! "Poor dear Mr. J. P.!" she writes. (By the way, Lord Bra-bourne further disguised Mr. J. P. in 1884 as "Mr. A.," which he certainly wouldn't do in 1924.)

Oh! dear Fanny, your mistake has been one that thousands of women fall into. He was the *first* young man who attached himself to you. That was the charm, and most powerful it is. Among the multitudes, however, that make the same mistake with yourself, there can be few indeed who have so little reason to regret it—*his* character and *his* attachment leave you nothing to be ashamed of. Upon the whole, what is to be done? You certainly *have* encouraged him to such a point, etc., etc.

Dear Fanny certainly had encouraged him, but found he was too serious. Aunt Jane put in a good word for him; she has no doubt he will get more lively; and if Fanny finds her brothers more witty, she must remember "that wisdom is better than wit."

And as to there being any objection from his *goodness*, from the danger of his becoming even Evangelical, I cannot admit *that*. I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be Evangelicals, and am at least persuaded that they who are so from Reason and Feeling, must be happiest and safest.

AUNT JANE

It seems, however, the gentleman's seriousness developed even beyond evangelical limits. According to Lord Brabourne, he finally objected to dancing, and that settled his hash with Miss Fanny. Presumably she acted upon the second (or Machiavellian) alternative put forward by Aunt Jane:—"Either allow him to go on as he has done, or whenever you are together behave with a coldness which may convince him that he has been deceiving himself." Aunt Jane admitted that it might give the gentleman some pain.

I have no doubt of his suffering a good deal for a time, a great deal, when he feels that he must give you up;—but it is no creed of mine, as you must be well aware, that such sort of Disappointments kill anybody.

When the lady nevertheless turned him down, she confessed to Aunt Jane that she still lived in dread of his marrying somebody else. Why? asks her Aunt, "You did not choose to have him yourself, why not allow him to take comfort where he can?" "Yet, how natural!" adds the Aunt, who is also a connoisseur of human nature.

Finally, *exit* the serious gentleman, and enter Mr. Wildman ("Mr. B.," in Brabourne). Poor Aunt Jane! Her novelist's fancy for match-making seems to have played her a trick over Mr. Wildman. "Mr. J. W. frightens me. He will have you. I see you at the altar." And then in the next letter (a short month later): "I have pretty well done with Mr. Wildman. By your description, he *cannot* be in

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love with you, however he may try at it, but I would not wish the match unless there were a great deal of Love on his side." She goes on: "Do not be in a hurry" (this is pretty good; it was *she* who had been in a hurry), "the right man will come at last." It is a pleasure to learn from Lord Brabourne that the right man did come (and Miss Fanny frankly told him all about her previous experiences, when he proposed to her in the Library). Alas! Three years after Aunt Jane had been laid in her grave. And long ago, long ago, Miss Fanny and Mr. J. P. and Mr. Wildman, and the gentleman who proposed to Miss Fanny in the Library were laid in their graves, too. That is the eternal commonplace—and the eternal pathos—of old letters and old love-stories.

A PLEA FOR ANNE

IN *Cassell's Weekly* there is an article by Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith on "The Heroines of Jane Austen," which, quietly and a little coolly appreciative, is a refreshing contrast to the extravagant adulation of most Austenites. But one needn't be an intemperate Austenite to be provoked by one or two errors of fact into which Miss Kaye-Smith has fallen.

She says, for instance, that Mansfield Park was in Hampshire, whereas it was in the county of Northampton, as reference to the very first sentence of the novel will show. And she repeats an ancient libel when she says: "I think the author was guilty of an unconscious betrayal of Elizabeth Bennet when she made her change of heart towards Darcy coincide with her first sight of his estate at Pemberley." This fiction was first invented by an enemy of Jane Austen's, and ought not to be repeated by any one who has read "Pride and Prejudice." The change of heart began at Hunsford, when Elizabeth had re-read and fully understood the letter that Darcy had thrust into her hands there. "She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think, without feeling that she had been

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blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd.” Her mind was in a tumult ; her eyes were opened to the real Darcy, or as much of the real Darcy as she could then know, and her feelings towards him forthwith changed. “ Mr. Darcy’s letter she was in a fair way of soon knowing by heart. She studied every sentence ; and her feelings towards its writer were at times widely different. When she remembered the style of his address, she was still full of indignation ; but when she considered how unjustly she had condemned and upbraided him, her anger was turned against herself ; and his disappointed feelings became the object of compassion. His attachment excited gratitude, his general character respect. . . .” When Maria and Elizabeth were leaving Hunsford, and Maria said, “ We have dined nine times at Rosings, besides drinking tea there twice ! How much I shall have to tell !” “ Elizabeth privately added, ‘ And how much I shall have to conceal !’ ” Could anything be plainer ? Elizabeth’s heart was stirred, and it was at Pemberley that the change was complete. Yes, at Pemberley, but not at Elizabeth’s “ first sight of his estate ” there. It was at the talk with the housekeeper—“ Every idea that had been brought forward by the housekeeper was favourable to his character ; and as she stood before the canvas on which he was represented and fixed his eyes upon herself, she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before ; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impro-

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priety of expression." There is, then, absolutely no justification for the ill-natured gibe about the "estate," and it is a pity that Miss Kaye-Smith has lightly accepted it.

These are facts, to be settled beyond cavil by appeal to the text. Another point is matter of opinion. Which is the truest, the best imagined, the finest of Jane Austen's heroines? Miss Kaye-Smith hovers between Emma Woodhouse and Elizabeth (whom she *will* call Elisabeth) Bennet, both of them self-confident, not to say bold, "baggages." Well, give me the timid, sensitive, pensive Anne Elliot. But Miss Kaye-Smith turns her down, and, it seems to me, for the oddest of reasons. "I will also rule out Anne Elliot, for I never seem able to get to know her quite well. She is lovable, tender, and sweet, and has depths in her which the others lack, but she is remote, adrift; I wonder if her maker ever quite knew her, if she wasn't always a little ill-at-ease with this her most ambitious creation." "Adrift," yes, that is precisely what she was meant to be, that is her story. But "remote"! Is there any other of Jane Austen's women who is so intimately known to us, whose very heart-beats are so minutely recorded, whose soul is laid so bare to us? Miss Thackeray has spoken of "a certain hardness of heart" in Miss Austen's heroines. And it is true of all of them—except Anne Elliot. Miss Kaye-Smith wonders if her maker ever quite knew her. How can she, or any one, read "Persuasion" without per-

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ceiving that, whatever else it may be, it is a spiritual autobiography? That Jane Austen put something of herself into each of her heroines no one will deny. She was high-spirited and sharp-tongued, like Elizabeth Bennet. She was a born match-maker, like Emma Woodhouse. But into Anne Elliot she put her heart, her disappointment in love, her *éducation sentimentale*, her inmost secret self. Read such a passage (too long to quote in full) as the evening party at the Musgroves, with Anne at the piano, her fingers mechanically at work, but her whole soul absorbed in Wentworth. “*Once* she felt he was looking at herself—observing her altered features, perhaps trying to trace in them the ruins of the face which had once charmed him; and *once* she knew that he must have spoken of her,” etc., etc., and ask yourself whether these are feelings merely imagined, or feelings actually experienced. The consciousness of being loved disposes Anne “to pity every one as being less happy than herself.” Whoever wrote that had been in love. I submit to Miss Kaye-Smith that in the heroine of “*Persuasion*” Jane Austen, so far from not quite knowing her, absolutely gave herself away.

It is thus that in art the truths of life get told, veiled, transformed, yet plainly visible to all who have eyes to see.

MISS LAROLLES

“AND by some other removals, and a little scheming of her own, Anne was enabled to place herself much nearer the end of the bench than she had been before, much more within reach of a passer-by. She could not do so, without comparing herself with Miss Larolles, the inimitable Miss Larolles”—you remember the Bath concert in “Persuasion,” and how Anne was scheming to give Captain Wentworth a chance of speaking to her? When Miss Austen wrote the passage, every reader would have known who the inimitable Miss Larolles was. To-day most readers will need reminding that Miss Larolles comes out of Miss Burney’s “Cecilia”—“I sat at the outside on purpose to speak to a person or two, that I knew would be strolling about; for if one sits on the inside there’s no speaking to a creature, you know, so I never do it at the Opera, nor in the boxes at Ranelagh, nor anywhere.” Miss Larolles found it dull at the Opera to sit still and listen to it; she preferred to speak to a “creature” or two. What she wanted was variety. How many centuries have passed since woman was declared to be “a various and mutable thing”? Declared by a man, of course. Man has always

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taunted woman with her love of change, instead of recognizing it as one of the most endearing of her charms. I do not remember if there is a *Spectator* paper on this subject. There should be. I fancy most of us to-day cannot but regret we were born too late to meet some of those Queen Anne women. How could beings so stiffly, so magnificently attired be either roguey-pogucys or mousey-pouseys? Yet they must have been, for the sage has truly declared that all women are born either one or t'other, just as all men are born either Aristotelians or Platonists. Which was Millamant? Beyond all eavil a roguey-pogucy. So are most of Shakespeare's heroines. George Meredith's, too. Miss Austen was fond of contrasting the two types—*e.g.*, Emma and Harriet Smith, Elizabeth and Jane Bennet, but "went all out" for the mousey-pousey in Fanny Price and Catherine Morland and Anne Elliot.

Variety is a need common to both sorts. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson (of I forget what), "it is carrying on the system of life." I think the women might make the same claim for their love of change. They are natural Hegelians. They recognize instinctively that the vital principle is not a state of being, but of becoming, and "signify the same in the usual way" by choosing a new hat once a week. Just think what the world would be like if woman were not various and mutable! If she wore her old hats, like a man! ("What do you do with your old hats, sir," asked the beggar of M. Bergeret. "I wear them,

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my good fellow," was the reply.) If she were repainted and redecorated only once in seven years like a leasehold flat ! If her skirts remained through the ages of one and the same length ! We should lose all motive for leaning out of window and have no future to look forward to. Human life would be petrified and euriosity extinet. Woman's love of change is our salvation. It costs money, yet must always be cheap at the price. The wise will regard it as an insurance against universal boredom, and cheerfully pay up the premiums which fall due every other moment. Under this providential system we may cry with Galileo, *eppur si muove*. It not merely augments, but creates, the joy of living. It turns the world into a rapid cinematograph.

But for the women themselves it is a fatal gift. For, nine times out of ten, they want more change than they can get, and when they can't get it they are oppressed by what they call the monotony of life. This is the excuse invariably offered on the stage for wives who run away with a lover ; a husband is always the same old husband, home life is so monotonous. It is the *motif* of a little dramatic sketch which the B.B.C. have lately been broadcasting. I take up the first novel to hand—Mr. Grant Richard's "Every Wife." Two wives inhabit what most people would call comfortable homes somewhere up the river. "Wine shone, red and amber, against the glistening white of the napery." But they are troubled by the old complaint, they are

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bored. So they set out, with their husbands' full consent (and handsome cheques) for Monte Carlo (which it is bad form this year, you learn, to abbreviate into "Monte"), where adventures happen which at any rate convict the novelist of an intimate familiarity with the Casino. Without woman's passion for change, this novel could never have been written.

Thus women are apt to be more often bored than men. I mean, of course, the old-fashioned, domestic, "womanly" women. If they can only explain and bewail their boredom to one another, all is well, apparently; otherwise, how account for the ladies leaning, with sleeves rolled up, over the garden fence, and conversing with the lady next door—a spectacle familiar to all railway passengers on approaching London? Ladies with no back gardens join the learned professions or run hat shops or go into Parliament, all to escape boredom.

The inimitable Miss Larolles had her own way. She took the outside seat. She took it "on purpose to speak to a person or two," instead of listening to the boring music. Jane Austen called her inimitable, but we know better. Imitators of Miss Larolles abound to-day. Social intercourse is more to them than art. As soon as the music or the play begins they start an animated conversation. Nevertheless, one must suffer them gladly. For they are part of the universal *élan vital*, the persistent pressure of their sex in quest of variety. Did not *Punch* the

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other day show us the archetype of this kind in the lady who wondered whether she should paint a circular or a straight eyebrow to match her dress? They can vary not only their eyebrows, but their complexions, their lips, their hair, nay, their very figures. They have lately taken (or is that fashion over?) to wigs of gold and silver, bless them! In short, the whole world is to them a theme to be played *con variazioni*. And the rest of us are all infinitely obliged to them.

CONGREVE

SIR EDMUND GOSSE has reprinted, with additions, his "Life of Congreve," first published in 1888, when he and the rest of us were younger. But there are no marks of youth in the book save, perhaps, a certain circumspect gravity of style and studious moderation of statement, which attest the sincerity and fervour of the young critic's faith in critical ideals.

He now writes, I think, with a freer pen, without, however, swerving from the strait path of true criticism. It is not much to say that there is no better biography of Congreve, for there is no other. Another appears, at this late hour, to be in prospect by a Rumanian scholar with the slightly disconcerting name of Protopopeseo. Let us await it with equanimity. Meanwhile this book is enough to go on with.

It is a learned rather than a lively book. You feel here and there a certain lack of sympathy between the scholar, the man of the study, with a rigid literary conscience and a strict time-table, and the gay man of the town. You note something of the same kind in La Bruyère drawing his "characters" of the Versailles courtiers; he understood them,

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but knew he would have had a headache in their company. Sir Edmund, for instance, holding the "sacerdotal" view of literature (and he has himself long been its revered high priest), cannot understand Congreve's utter cessation of writing after *The Way of the World*. You have the implied judgment that it is the duty of a man with so brilliant a pen never to lay it down. There is, to be sure, a type of worldling who has literature in his bones, so to speak, and who must die pen in hand. Gibbon was such an one. ("Another damned thick square book, Mr. Gibbon, "as a Royal personage observed to him, "scribble, scribble, scribble, eh, Mr. Gibbon?") Buffon was another. But Congreve, it is evident, wrote always with difficulty. (How, indeed, could such a style ever have been written with ease?) There was nothing of the "scribble, scribble, scribble" passion about him. He may have elected to live his life to the full instead of retiring into his study to compose plays about it. And he lived it, at any rate, quietly, like a gentleman—unlike his young *protégé* Charles Hopkins, who lived his life to the full so effectually as to die, it was said, "a martyr to the cause of hard drinking and a too Passionate fondness for the Fair sex." Or Congreve may have been simply lazy, the victim of a temperament indicated by his excessive obesity.

Besides, there was the Braecgirdle, not to mention some other ladies. You will never account for a man's life and actions until you know his love-

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record, which (unless he is a wretch like Casanova) you never will know—*et voilà!* Anyhow, Congreve, it is clear, had no great admiration for the slaves of the pen, as shown by his famous remark to Voltaire, which the Frenchman (with whom writing was not so much a religion as a frenzy) so crassly misunderstood. Our author speaks of “the indifference, the chagrin, of an aged man of letters, stricken with silence, with never a drop of ichor left in his shrunk veins.” That strikes me as altogether a fancy picture. I think rather of Congreve drinking his Burgundy at the Kit-Cat Club, buying a picture or two, and quietly satisfied that the author of *Love for Love* and *The Way of the World* had written enough for honour. As a final certificate of bliss, he was, we know, passionately fond of music. Surely this must have been the happiest of lives!

The book is uniformly so prudent, so wise, so “sound” as to be a provocation to a perverse reader. I am really vexed at its cool and cautious praise of Congreve’s prose. A lapse into generous enthusiasm here might have been forgiven. The author might have stamped with his authority the judgment (which I hold firmly to be a simple truth) that Congreve was one of our very greatest artists in prose. Sir Edmund prefers to dwell upon his verse—which, by comparison with his prose, was as water unto wine. He thinks the blank verse of *The Mourning Bride* was “the model on which most eighteenth-century unrhymed iambics were

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formed.” He discusses, with minute particularity, Congreve’s inversions, breaks of cæsura, and variations of stress, and takes delight in finding justification for them by Miltonic practice. As though the interest of Congreve were an interest of prosody! If, instead of these *chinoiserie*s, the biographer had attempted some analysis of Congreve’s magnificent prose rhythms, I venture to think he would have done his author, and his readers, better service. For there is a music in the “other harmony of prose” which appeals, I submit, to a finer ear than that which requires the titillations of Pindaric exercises; and further, it is a music which still lives while the other, if it ever was alive and anything more than a fashion, is now as dead as a doornail. Take, for instance, this simple passage from *Love for Love* :—

ANGELICA.—What am I?

VALENTINE.—You’re a woman, one to whom Heaven gave beauty when it grafted roses on a briar. You are the reflection of Heaven in a pond, and he that leaps at you is sunk. You are all white, a sheet of lovely, spotless paper, when you first are born; but you are to be scrawled and blotted by every goose’s quill. I know you; for I loved a woman, and loved her so long, that I found out a strange thing: I found out what a woman was good for.

or Millamant’s more famous :—

Beauty, the lover’s gift!—Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then if one pleases one makes more.

Here is the rhythm of Congreve’s prose, “with a

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final ring," as Meredith said. Add the joy of what Hazlitt called "a peculiar flavour in the very words," and you begin to understand the unique virtue of Congreve, not only in the history of English prose (which I put in to placate the pedagogues), but in the *jardin secret* of literary delights (which I put in to please myself). I cannot help wishing that Sir Edmund had warmed up a little more to this aspect of Congreve. But we are all indebted to him for the reissue of a learned, authoritative, and, indeed, indispensable book.

“THE WAY OF THE WORLD”

DOES Congrevean comedy belong to the world of fantasy or of reality? Fantasy, the plain man will at once reply. For the plain man does not understand irony and paradox and wit, he never encounters them either at his own fireside or at the office, and so, when confronted with a set of people talking nothing else, he declares them to be “unreal.” He is outraged in his literal, commonsense instincts when he listens to dialogue like this:—

MILLAMANT.—Oh, ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters. Nobody knows how to write letters and yet one has 'em, one doesn't know why. They serve one to pin up one's hair.

WITWOUND.—Is that the way? Pray, madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters? I find I must keep copies.

MILLA.—Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwound. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think I tried once, Mincing.

MINCING.—Oh, mem, I shall never forget it.

MILLA.—Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

MINC.—Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow, mem. And all to no purpose. But when your Laship pins it up with poetry, it fits so pleasant the next day as anything, and is so pure and so crips.

WIT.—Indeed, so crips?

MINC.—You're such a critic, Mr. Witwound.

This is an altogether new distinction between prose

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and verse for the plain man, and he resents it. And that Mineing, what a shocking little liar ! In short, wit humiliates his pride. It is an obvious "class" distinction. It makes the world unsafe for democracy. Charles II. was witty, a bad King, and Wilkes a sad rascal with the ladies, and Beauclerk, who ill-treated his wife. So he reads the nearest antidote to wit in the literature or drama of to-day—and finds it with remarkable ease.

But the "fantastic" view of Congreve has been held, of course, by men quite other than plain. Notoriously, Charles Lamb, who argued that the Congrevean world was so manifestly unreal that it was absurd to talk of its "immorality." We all know Macaulay's smashing reply : that such immorality was only too real, and was to be found flourishing among "low town-rakes" and "dashing Cyprians." At the same time, this attitude, I think we must be now agreed, was a little "sniffy." We have been deluged with Memoirs, Diaries, and Correspondence of Macaulay's time which indicate that a loose sexual morality was no more then than at any other time confined to the stews. But there was more hypocrisy, "the homage which vice pays to virtue." We were already becoming less hypocritical when Matthew Arnold in the 'eighties (*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 30, 1883) ventured upon this :—

So salutary is it to be carried into a world of fantasy that I doubt whether even the comedy of Congreve and Wycherley, presented to us at the present day by good artists, would do us

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harm. I would not take the responsibility of recommending its revival, but I doubt its doing harm. And the reason is that it places us in what is for us now a world wholly of fantasy, and that in such a world, with a good critic and with good actors, we are not likely to come to much harm. Such a world's main appeal is to our imagination rather than our senses.

Matthew Arnold's handling of the delicate matter, observe, is still gingerly. He shrinks from any responsibility about it. But it wouldn't do us “much” harm—on condition that we get “good actors” for it.

Well, we now get good actors for *The Way of the World* at the Hammersmith Lyric. As I said in reviewing the first night performance, they frankly fantasticate the play. It is not therefore to be concluded that they agree with Matthew Arnold. The truth is, of course, that at this time of day the old play must be fantasticated if it is to draw the crowd. This for reasons good, which I have already given and need not repeat. But, coolly analysing our impressions and emotions about it, do we feel that we have been looking at a world of fantasy? Certainly its main appeal is to our imagination rather than our senses. So is the appeal of every true work of art. But that is not my point. Are the images created in the spectator's consciousness images of the real or images of the unreal? I think there can be only one answer to this question. Every character in the play strikes you as an individual, a “person,” as Lady Wishfort would say, palpitating with life. They are almost appalling in their stark reality.

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Take the scene in the Mall between Fainall and Mrs. Marwood, where the guilty pair fall out, revolt against the intolerable burden of their clandestine love, hiss and almost spit their hate at one another, then kiss again, wearily, with tears. Could anything be more "real"? Is there anything, say, in *Madame Bovary*, more "relentless," more bitter in the mouth? Witwoud and Petulant "rag" (they would have said "rally") one another just like two old schoolfellows or shipmates meeting to-day at their club. As for Millamant and Lady Wishfort, they belong to the "eternal verities," and there's no more to be said.

What seems to lift these people out of the real world into the fantastie is not only the continuous wit but the rich music of their talk. They speak the exquisite, rhythmical prose of Congreve, and such speech was never heard in the "real" world. With that prose on her curl-papers Millamant need never have had recourse to verse to make her hair "erips." It makes even Sir Wilfull's drunkenness glorious.

SIR WIL.—The sun's a good pimple, an honest soaker, he has a cellar at your antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your antipodes—your antipodes are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows. If I had a bumper I'd stand upon my head and drink a health to 'em. . . . I cannot find by the map that your Mufti is orthodox, whereby it is a plain case that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and [hiccup] Greek for claret.

Yet, if we are to believe Voltaire, Congrevean prose was once the language of mortal men. "Vous y

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voyez partout le langage des honnêtes gens avec des actions de fripon ; ce qui prouve qu’il connaissait bien son monde, et qu’il vivait dans ce qu’on appelle la bonne compagnie.” If so, here is the last prop of the “fantasy” theory knocked clean away !

SCRIBE

SCRIBE, the greatest of all theatrical purveyors, died so long ago (1861), and is so completely forgotten, that it is high time to have a book about him. A Professor in the University of California, Dr. Neil Cole Arvin, obliges with one—"Eugène Scribe and the French Theatre," written from that distance which lends enchantment to the view as well as some errors in perspective. Was Scribe really so important in the history of the theatre? Did he so markedly influence his successors? "Practically every innovation, every reform, every novelty found in the drama of the nineteenth century," says Dr. Arvin, "originated with Scribe, and the highest point in the development of the main *genres* of dramatic literature was reached in his plays." This, if true at all, is only true of the technicalities, the machinery of the theatre, the mere stage-carpentry—things that matter very little and may almost be said to invent themselves. Everything of value in the modern theatre, its intellectual dialectic, its emotional sincerity, its fundamental verisimilitude, has been a revolt against that shallow theatricality which we call Scribism.

Of Scribe's own 300 and odd plays, which were

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once to be seen not only in Paris but in every theatre in Europe, the sole survivor to-day is *Adrienne Lecouvreur*—and that from the mere accident that its heroine caught the fancy of Sarah Bernhardt. Now that Sarah is gone, I doubt if we shall ever see *Adrienne* again. Scribe's great success—commercial success—in his day was, like other commercial successes, the result of three things: a natural instinct for the business, industry and skill in meeting a popular demand, and a certain mediocrity of mind. Scribe was born for the theatre and scribbled plays almost from infancy. He consistently catered for the tastes of his public—that curious, mixed *bourgeoisie* of his time, the Royalists of the Faubourg St. Germain, the ex-Imperialists of the Faubourg St. Honoré, and the new rich of the Chaussée d'Antin. These various interests he was careful to conciliate, generally by a system of mixed marriages. The Royalist heroine married the Imperial colonel's nephew, or the young marquis, ruined at cards, but an accomplished horseman, married the banker's daughter. The proper thing was to marry for money, an eminently *bourgeois* ideal; the passion of love Scribe left to the romantic playwrights. Indeed, money plays as conspicuous a part in Scribe's theatre as in the novels of his contemporary Balzac. But Balzac gives you, what Scribe could not, the passion as well. Scribe's essential mediocrity and shallowness of mind was, no doubt, the chief factor in his success: it kept so steadily on the mental

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level of his materialistic public. Like theirs, his moral code was strictly prudential and regulated by the social proprieties. Husbands always triumphed over lovers, and the cause of passion is always sacrificed to that of "la famille." "Respectability" was the chief ideal. As for history, that was a collection of trivial anecdotes, all illustrating the dictum "What great events from little causes spring." Thus Scribe wrote a play about Walpole (*L'Ambitieux*), in which that Minister's fortune hangs in the balance through George II.'s discovery of a love-letter tied up in the Royal mistress's handkerchief; and a play about Queen Anne (*Le Verre d'Eau*), in which the political history of England is vitally affected because the Duchess of Marlborough drops a glass of water in the Queen's lap. Indeed, Scribe's history is as childish as any in Hugo or Dumas père, without their excuse of making the absurdity a pretext for passionate or romantic adventure.

If there is hardly any passion in Scribe (because it is not "respectable," because it is a nuisance to "the family," because it is not correct form in the Chaussée d'Antin), still less are there any characters (because puppets will do just as well, or even better, to carry out a plot which is merely an ingenious combination of incidents). Dr. Arvin prefers to say that "this conception of dramatic art by its very nature relieves the author of the responsibility of taking account of characters, sentiment, or passion." He might as well say that it relieves the author of

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the responsibility of authorship. Can you think of Balzac without thinking of his characters ? We say a Hulot, a Mme. Marneffe, a Père Goriot, a Rubempré, a Coralie, a Rastignac, and know them better than our own blood-relations. A list of Scribe's characters would be a list of meaningless, unidentifiable names. Is it to be wondered at that he is clean forgotten ?

He might, even so, have escaped oblivion, had he had the advantage of a style. But that invaluable preservative was wholly lacking ; it was Théophile Gautier's perpetual grievance against him that he had no style. It is easy to overstress the point, no doubt. Balzac had no style, or a very bad one, and yet has more enthusiasts to-day than he ever had in his lifetime. Labiche had no style, but his eleven volumes of collected plays are still, despite the drawback, a perpetual feast of delight. On the other hand, I think some of the plays of Dumas *filz* live as much by their style as by their dramatic quality, or so at least I thought when I saw *Le Demi-Monde* in London the other day. The importance of style, the most personal of elements, in dramatic work will always be a disputable question, for it is the peculiarity of the dramatist that he never speaks in his own person. Yet every dramatist of mark has his own, unmistakable fashion of speech ; Congreve's is distinct from Farquhar's, Goldsmith's from Sheridan's, Maugham's from Shaw's.

Scribe's, however, was the pedestrian slipshod

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which we call "no" style. It was the common language of the classes with no ear for language, the busy philistine *bourgeoisie* for whom Scribe wrote. No wonder the poets and critics and the whole æsthetic and literary world were banded against him! No wonder Gautier wrote in despair: "Quant à nous, quatre à cinq années de feuilletons nous ont amené à cette idée, confirmée par les succès de M. Scribe, que le théâtre n'avait rien de littéraire, et que la pensée n'y était que pour fort peu de choses." No wonder that when they asked the dying Heine "Pouvez-vous siffler?" he gasped out, "Pas même une comédie de M. Scribe!"

CROCE IN OXFORD

I SOMETIMES wonder if the dons at Oxford know their luck. (For "Oxford" Cambridge men may read "Cambridge" *passim*, if they like; I intend no invidious distinction; but feel it would be presumptuous in me to speak of a university which I mainly know of by hearsay.) They live, to be sure, in a rather relaxing climate. Their port is not quite so good as they suppose. And there is the chronic plague of undergraduates. But they escape the so-called great world and its hurly-burly. Thanks to the Time Spirit, and with no trouble to themselves, they shine by comparison with their unworthy predecessors of the remote Gibbonian age. And when they write, they don't scribble from compulsion or in a hurry, but in a leisured, gentlemanly fashion. I shouldn't be surprised to hear that they used quill pens, and sand instead of blotting paper. Naturally their prose has *l'air de la maison*, the eloistered peace of the Provost's Lodge, the antique odour of the Bodleian—but always, with a deft touch here and there, brought up, like everything else in Oxford, to the present date. Pater's prose, whatever else you may say about it—and there are many people who heartily dislike it—was a prose redolent of

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Oxford. To get the quintessential flavour of it you must read it on the big lawn of St. John's or by the lake in Worcester College garden.

It is a peculiarly academic treat to have one don addressing another, admonishing him as to his duties, suggesting theories for his consideration. With what an old-world courtesy the advice is tendered, with what delicate suavity the new point of view is suggested! Here is the Waynflete Professor addressing from what Pope calls "the groves of Magdalen" an open letter on "The Nature of Art" to the Professor of Poetry. He seems to be apologizing all the time for his presumption. He regrets to have to omit, in printing it, "some complimentary expressions to which the modesty of Professor Garrod would not permit me to give a wider publicity." But there are plenty of soothing compliments left. The profit he has received from the freely rendered services of his colleagues "lays upon me the obligation to attempt, however clumsily, and at the cost, it may be, of a seeming conceit or arrogance, some return to those to whom I am thus indebted. . . ."

I do so not to attempt to fix upon you a conception of your duties which may be other than what you hold, but chiefly in the hope of distinguishing over against them some different or remainder region where my own lie, and so discovering, if it may be, how we may help one another, or at least in what currency I may look to repay what I have received and hope to continue receiving from you.

Nor, perhaps, will all this gilding of the pill seem

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superfluous when you find that the Waynflete Professor is proposing to administer to the Professor of Poetry nothing less than a stiff dose of Croce ! Did I not say that everything in Oxford is brought up to the present date ? True, Croce's theory of art has now been before the world for some score or so of years, but it still holds the field as the most "modern" of æsthetic views. A collector of theories—and the Waynflete Professor tells us that it is his business to collect theories—would have but an incomplete collection without Croce. But isn't there something piquant in the association of Croce, so modern, so anti-academic, as he is never tired of declaring himself to be, with the ancient academic chair of Waynflete ? And isn't that just one of the peculiar charms of Oxford, her blending of the new with the old, a process that has been going on from the days when Erasmus brought the New Learning to Corpus to yesterday, or the day before, when Bergson was housed in New College and discoursed in the Schools ?

Professor J. A. Smith quotes (as, by the way, did Croce before him) a sentence from one of Flaubert's letters to George Sand : " Mais qu'ils sont drôles les universitaires du moment qu'ils se mêlent de l'Art." But there is nothing "droll" in the Professor's treatment of the subject. He gives a straightforward exposition of the Crocean views that art is a theoretical, not a practical, activity, and that the common distinction between the arts is philo-

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sophically, that is, really, non-existent—there are no arts, there is only art. He is almost compelled to begin in this way by the fact that he is writing to a Professor of Poetry, who would naturally be supposed to consider poetry a separate, independent art. But, I think the Professor would agree, this unavoidable ordering of the argument lacks the clarity of that adopted by Croce, who begins (in both the “*Estetica*” and the “*Breviario*”) by positing art as intuition-expression and deduces the rest as consequential upon that. When the Professor does reach the point, however, he is quite uncompromising about it. “What is art, the nature or essence or spirit of art? To this I reply categorically and unconditionally, ‘The beholding of what is individual,’ that and nothing less or more or other, that always and that everywhere.” People of the outer world are apt to complain that you can never get an Oxford don to put his foot down, to speak out. Well, here is one who does.

But, after all, I am not concerned with the Professor’s argument or with Croce’s. What seems to me interesting is that it should have been maintained in Oxford, and not by some adventurous undergraduate, seeking to *épater le bourgeois* and finding this new thing to his hand in a long vacation trip to Naples, but by the authoritative occupant of an ancient academic chair. To add the last touch of piquancy, it has been addressed to the Professor of Poetry as to a novice or even an opponent. For,

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clearly, the writer of the open letter would not have been at such pains were he preaching to the converted ; besides, there is his own significant reference to " our conversation a week ago " : " a few disquieting signs showed themselves that you were willing to tolerate, perhaps even to use, language imparting or implying views inconsistent with or plainly opposed to it." Certainly, the Waynflete Professor is a little ahead of his time.

It is only of late (he says) that it (Croce's theory of Art) has come to itself and its own. That it has done so has escaped the notice of many observers of signs in the philosophic sky, and of more critics and practitioners of Poetry. In my own case it was all but an accident that informed me of its coming to being and power.

Happy accident ! But, the truth is, Oxford is the place where such accidents are bound to happen. That is part of its magical charm. If a new theory of anything is floating about the world, provided only it have elegance of form, in addition to as much truth as can be expected in a theory, it is fated to be magnetically attracted by Tom Tower or to catch in the clms of Addison's Walk, and some passing don will be sure to get hold of it.

CAMBRIDGE MOMENTS

It is only from London that one should visit our two university towns. After the racket and bustle one is the better able to appreciate their quiet charm. On a like principle Keats peppered his tongue in order the better to enjoy the flavour of "cool, delicious claret." But to get the true taste and bouquet of Cambridge, you must visit Oxford first. Indeed, you must first know Oxford like your pocket. Otherwise, you will lack a standard, and Cambridge will only surprise you by its singularity ; you will be unable to distinguish between the special and the generic. For all values are comparative, and, without comparison with Oxford, most of the charm of Cambridge will be missed.

And so I applaud the wisdom of those Oxford men who have migrated to Cambridge. There was the great Bentley—one always speaks of "the great" Bentley, as the inventor of the flat-iron in Boswell spoke of himself as "the great Twalmley," and as a past generation of Cambridge men spoke of "the great" O. B.—the great Bentley (it must be admitted that he was of St. John's, Cambridge, originally) who spent a year or two at Wadham before he became Master of Trinity. The Vice-

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Chancellor of Oxford reminded us of this significant fact at the Trinity Commemoration Dinner the other day, and I believe few of his hearers were aware of it, they looked so surprised, not to say scandalized. Was it in revenge for this reminder that a subsequent speaker, a learned Judge of Appeal, alluded to the Vice-Chancellor as a "representative of some university or other—I think they call it Oxford"? Anyhow, Bentley's prolonged and fierce feud with the fellows of his college, which is a part of English history, seems to have left a lingering feeling behind. I looked for his picture both in the Master's Lodge and in Combination Room, but saw it not. At last I found his bust, hidden in a long row of other busts in the Library, whereas Byron has a whole statue to himself there, the most conspicuous object in the room. I suppose, in the estimation of the world at large, Byron is a greater man than Bentley. But, in an academic society, surely not? In a seat of learning scholars should rank before poets. Otherwise, what, if you please, are universities for?

Then there was Blayds, who migrated (to put it politely) from Balliol to Cambridge, resuming—as Miss Horatia Calverley reminds us in the current *Literary Supplement*—the old family name of Calverley. It must have been Blayds, not Calverley, of whom Oxford men tell the tale that, asked by a stranger in the new Balliol Quad what order of architecture it was of, looked round and said he

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wasn't sure, but he believed it was Early Bloody. I hope Miss Calverley will not upset this pleasing legend. Then, in our own time, there is Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, sometime of Trinity, Oxford, and now a Fellow of Jesus, Cambridge ; and one could name ever so many more who have thus made the best of both worlds.

These migrants would, I think, agree in admitting that Oxford has nothing to compare with the beautiful, and thoroughly romantic, landscape behind the belt of colleges stretching from John's to Clare. Addison's Walk, between the meandering Cherwell on the one side and the deer park on the other, with the creeper-elad tower and the noble Magdalen Bridge in the middle distance—the spot that Pope called “The groves of Magdalen”—will of course occur to all Oxford men as the finest scene in the world—until they have stood on Clare Bridge (dumpy, serio-comic with the irregular curves of its balustrade and those fat, jolly stone spheres punctuating the rhythm) and gazed up and down the Cam, which, at this time of year, at any rate, is of quite respectable volume. The Magdalen scene is richer in aspect, more “comfortable,” more Constable-ish. But this has the tender melancholy, the tenuous delicacy of a Corot ; it disposes to reverie, to meditations among the tombs—only the tomb must be some elegant sarcophagus, flanked by a weeping willow, and an attendant nymph with extinguished torch, such as you get in an old First Empire cameo ; it has

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indeed—what is the word I am seeking ?—it has an “ elegiac ” charm.

“ Elegiac ” reminds me of the author of a famous Elegy, and one of the greatest of Cambridge poets, who wrote of his University in a very different strain :—

Hail, horrors, hail ! ye ever gloomy bowers,
Ye Gothic fanes and antiquated towers,
Where rushy Camus’ slowly winding flood
Perpetual draws his humid train of mud.

I like to think that the author of these lines was lured by the gentlemen-commoners of Peterhouse, on a cry of “ Fire ! ” down his rope ladder into a water-butt. Or rather—I wish I could think it ; for the Master of Peterhouse tells me the water-butt legend is quite unauthentic. Gray, I am sure, would never have written these lines, if he had gone to Oxford first.

For—I see I am gradually coming round to that—only Oxford men can be real connoisseurs of Cambridge. This, I take it, is what the sage meant who said, “ Oxford men have their Cambridge moments.” They will have their most exquisite Cambridge moment, as I have already implied, on Clare Bridge ; they will get another by pursuing the lane at the back of the Senate House, past “ The Gate of Honour,” to the narrow street (perhaps Trinity Street, I cannot remember) that faces the portals of Trinity and John’s. The Gate of Honour is a Jacobean plaything (rather battered), like an old

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nursery toy, that makes you smile. (Why is it that some bits of architecture provoke a smile? I never pass that little bank that Sir Edwin Lutyens has just built by St. James's in Piccadilly without a chuckle of delight.) The street is one of those narrow, homely streets that are so characteristic of Cambridge, the typical country-town street, yet obviously bearing the University stamp. Perhaps I ought to add that one's Cambridge moments—landscape, bridge, and street—were the more easily enjoyed—I must not say more enjoyable—because Term was over, and the undergraduates had gone down.

LONG-HAIRED

THE new Professor of Poetry at Oxford has lost no time in making one of those authoritative announcements that are expected from new Professors. Old Professors need only profess, while nobody marks them, but new Professors must make a little splash, to let you know they are there. "The race of long-haired poets," says the new Poetry Professor, "is dead." You are not to mistake this for propaganda. There is no reason whatever for suspecting a secret compact between the Poetry Professor and the Oxford hair-cutters, already the most fortunate of craftsmen, *sua si bona norint*. Thackeray (or, perhaps, FitzGerald) said of James Spedding's high forehead that no hair would grow at that altitude. But Spedding was a Cambridge man. In Oxford hair grows luxuriantly on the very highest of high brows, to say nothing of the passmen, and the hair-cutters profit accordingly. No, the Professor's statement was purely professional. He wished to indicate the disappearance of those poets of old who held that they were not as other men are, that they had something of a divine madness about them, and wore their hair long to prove it.

Naturally, a Professor of Poetry keeps his gaze

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fixed upon poets. For him the rest of the world doesn't count. Otherwise, he would hardly have failed to observe that the change he discerns in poets is really a part of the great mundane movement. Not only the race of long-haired poets, but the race of long-haired stockbrokers, as well as the race of long-haired butchers, bakers, and candlestick-makers, is dead. Musicians seem to be the only exception to the rule—though Paderewski, I am told, has now had his hair cut. It may be that when all the world wore its hair long the poets wore theirs somewhat longer. Or that they continued to wear it long for some time after the rest of the world had had theirs cut. This would be what the historians call a period of transition. In either case, two hypotheses may be put forward to account for the practice, one historical, the other pseudo-scientific. The first is connected with the great Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century. The French romantics wore their hair long to distinguish themselves from the classicists. Were they not called "*romantiques à tous crins*"—Théophile Gautier and Pétrus Borel and Philothée O'Neddy? This may have established a poetic tradition which our own poets followed. Or else our poets may have adhered to some doctrine of capillary inspiration, and thought that, with their hair shorn, they would share the fate of Samson and be delivered over to the Philistines. If so, here is a new explanation of the fact that the poetry of the eighteenth century was denied

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the name by our romantic school. For Mr. Pope and his contemporaries had their heads shaven and wore wigs, and though capillary inspiration might be a plausible theory as applied to your own hair, it obviously broke down in the case of a wig, particularly a horsehair wig. Here is a point, it seems to me, peculiarly within the province of a Professor of Poetry; it illustrates the subtle relation between hair and verse through the ages; and I venture to hope that Mr. Garrod will find time to give it his best consideration.

It is not only that hair influences poetry, producing, as we have seen, a genuine lyricism, the poetry that Mr. Garrod calls "vital, organic, pulsating," in the men of the Romantic Revival, or "long-haired" period, and a didactic, epigrammatic, or prosaic poetry in the men of the "wig" period; we also have evidence that, contrariwise, poetry influences hair. We saw not long ago at the Hammersmith Lyric that Millamant pinned up her hair only with papers of verse, which, Mincing said, made it so pleasant next day as anything, so pure and so "crisp," whereas when she once tried prose it was all to no purpose, and gave Mincing, she vowed, the cramp in her fingers. Yet, remember, this was poetry of the "wig" period—Dryden's, perhaps, or some of young Mr. Pope's lisping in numbers. Stay, now I think of it, Millamant preferred "natural, easy Suckling." Did Suckling belong to the wig or the pre-wig period? If pre-

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wig, then he must have worn his own hair, and worn it very long. Again, then, we have the two conflicting schools in a new light. The subject seems to open up endless ramifications, and, once more I suggest, offers a rich field for exploration by the Oxford Professor of Poetry.

One might, perhaps, profitably invite inquiry from the other side ; I mean from the hair-dressers or Professors of Coiffure. As thus. Is there any connexion traceable between the modern short crop and the new school of Verslibrists ? Might we not look for a great Poetic Renascence if our poets had their hair bobbed ? What is the most suitable hair-tonic for (*a*) blank verse, (*b*) triolets and pantoums, and (*c*) nursery-rhymes ? Does baldness indicate a complete divorce from the Muse, or is there any hair-restorer, pomatum, electric or other treatment which can be confidently recommended to renew inspiration ? If one could only get these questions satisfactorily answered by competent experts, the Professor of Poetry might soon be on the list of Inter-Collegiate Lectures and—who knows ?—Pembroke become once more a nest of singing-birds.

CATCH WORDS

THE Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University has been lecturing us upon our loose and unscholarly phrases, and that is a subject that comes home to all men's business and bosoms. (He is a stickler for exact quotation, so, to save my Bacon, I give the original text: "For that, as it seemes, they [*i.e.*, 'My Essayes'] come home, to Mens Businesse, and Bosomes.") For that very reason we are all, perhaps, a little "touchy" about it. Every man, said Swift, writes his own English (though that is a quotation I have never been able to verify), and, certainly, speaks it. He feels it to be his own, as much a part of himself as the nose on his face, and so is inclined to resent outside criticism of it as "personal." Sir Henry Hadow was, I suspect, conscious of this when he declared that "there was a great tendency to say that verbal accuracy in tiny detail was pedantic"; he wished to take the wind out of our sails, should we be minded to call him "pedant." Well, I have no desire to call a man of his authority any names. His strictures were based on common sense and good taste (by which, naturally, I mean that they were in conformity with my own taste), and made, I doubt not, for edification. And yet . . . and yet

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. . . there is a perverse imp within me that prompts me to cavilling whenever I hear or read one of these lectures on English.

I always feel that there is a little more to be said for vulgar errors than the lecturers—so exasperatingly prim and proper, so imposing in their academic gowns and hoods—are willing to admit. Demos is inarticulate and slipshod. Poor, half-educated, newspaper-gorged Demos! But, after all, Demos, in this matter of language as in so many others, has the last word. What he says (whether academically right or wrong) ultimately “goes.” (This is an American “catch” word, “which means,” says Sir Henry, “a word which people use without thinking.” Why do I use it? Because I want, incidentally, to show that I am a man and a brother, familiar with current colloquialisms; because I wish to deliver myself like a man of this world.) Thus Demos at the end of the war was fond of saying “good-bye-ee,” instead of good-bye. “It was every time,” says Sir Henry, “greeted with ripples of happy laughter. It was neither better nor worse than the ‘catch’ words which preceded or followed it, but it did not afford high testimony to our intellectual discrimination.” It afforded, at any rate, high testimony to the popularity of Mr. Harry Tate, in whose music-hall “turn,” if I am not mistaken, “good-bye-ee” had its origin. But, surely, “catch” words are not to justify themselves by intellectual discrimination? That they can be

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used without thinking is their charm ; we cannot for every moment of our lives be thinking. And they gratify the social instinct ; show that we are members one of another, not beasts kept in separate cages. They attest the solidarity of the race. They enrich the public stock of harmless pleasure. This one, it seems, was “ every time greeted with ripples of happy laughter.” “ Give me the making of a nation’s ballads,” etc., said some one ; he might better have said, “ Give me the making of a nation’s catch words.” They have their day, they are overdone, and then good-bye (or good-bye-ee) to them—we are rippling with happy laughter over a new one.

Then there is the blessed word “ meticulous.” Sir Henry, I submit, is a little meticulous over this. “ He read in a book a few days ago the words ‘ meticulous accuracy of the machine.’ The man who wrote that had got it into his head that ‘ meticulous ’ meant something to do with exact measure. It had no more to do with that than with a meat safe. ‘ Meticulous ’ meant timorous. When it came to a ‘ meticulous accuracy,’ what did it mean ? What was the machine afraid of ? (Laughter.) ” The fair inference from the phrase quoted seems to me to be that the man who wrote it had got it into his head, not that “ meticulous,” but that “ meticulous accuracy ” meant something to do with exact measure. And does it not ? Does it not mean accuracy attained with anxiety—anxiety not to be inaccurate ? And the question about the machine

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being afraid, though it got its laugh, strikes me as somewhat puerile. Obviously there could be no ingredient of anxiety in the accuracy attained by the machine; but is there anything ridiculous in attributing, as we all of us do every day, human qualities to machines—which, like the famous wooden leg, often seem “as weak as flesh, if not weaker”? Is it ridiculous for the engine-driver or the motorist to call his machine “she”? I think Sir Henry has been a little hard on the writer quoted, whoever he was. At the same time, I have no doubt in my own mind that the writer was ignorant of the meaning of “meticulous” and its relation to *metus*, and simply used the phrase “meticulous accuracy” because he had seen it used all over the place. The phrase, in fact, is becoming a public nuisance. It is all the fault of the imitative instinct in mankind, which M. Tarde tells us is so important a factor in the making of human society, but which is also responsible for debasing so much live language into mechanical journalese.

We all have our pet dislikes. I wish Sir Henry Hadow had said something scathing, and got “laughter” from his audience, about the misuse of “convincing” in current theatrical criticism. You read that “Mr. A., as Claude Melnotte, was hardly convincing,” that “Miss B. was not so convincing as her predecessor Miss C. in the part of the singing chambermaid,” or even that “the dancing of Mlle. D. lacked conviction.” As though the art of

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stage-presentation were a ratioeivative process, proceeding syllogistically, and leading up to a final *Q.E.D.* ! Here again the imitative instinct is at its fell work. Some critic once used the word in a newspaper, let us hope correctly ; other writers are taken with the look of it, think it a " boss word," and use it mechanically, without giving a thought to its propriety. " Arresting " is another word that is being overdone in criticism ; it is becoming as great a nuisance as the " amazing " of the contents bills. But we all form habits, especially bad habits. If any fellow-scribbler wishes to attack my own weaknesses, here are some of them to go on with : " delight," " subtle," " engaging." *Hodie mihi, cras tibi !*

In the very next column to the newspaper report of Sir Henry Hadow's address, I read that No. 207 in the Pastel Society's exhibition was " very pearly and sweet," and, in a novel I took up immediately afterwards, that a young lady " looked very sweet." " Sweet " is being turned to bitter by over-consumption. But it is not for the likes of me to expatiate on the theme. I leave it to Sir Henry Hadow, who speaks with authority and not as the scribes.

GRAND WORDS

THE *obiter dicta* of the magisterial bench always secure a good press. Reporters feverishly flimsy them, and contents bills "feature" them as "amazing." Our London magistrates, not without guile, pop them off in good time for the City Special edition. Thus everybody is pleased—save, perhaps, those rival candidates for publicity, the County Court Judges. His Honour feels rooted in dishonour until he can get into print as good a joke as His Worship's. But neither trespasses on the other's ground. His Honour is inclined to the racy and waxes witty over the greed of creditors or the follies of the law; His Worship is generally a helpless addict to the *belles lettres*. The Police magistrate has, I think, chosen the better part. There is room for all tastes in literature, including the pedantic. And was there not a touch of the pedant in that magistrate who the other day referred sarcastically to the words "altercation" and "demeanour" as grand? To the policeman guilty of them he is reported to have said: "You use very grand words, and I don't understand you a bit." Are these words, then, so grand as to be unintelligible? I should have thought their meaning, like what song the Sirens sang, to be not beyond

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conjecture. We do not expect the metropolitan police to speak the English of Jeremy Taylor, but that hardly seems a reason for restricting them to words of one syllable, especially as the drunk and disorderlies are not denied the freedom of a rich and copious vocabulary. I think I see what has happened. This magistrate has been converted by the new stylists or *staccatoists* who came in along with shingled hair. Let him look to it, lest one day he be erept his bench, with drums and tramlings, by Sir Thomas Browne and whelmed by Samuel Johnson in inspissated gloom.

Meanwhile, for a whole week or more, the leader-writers have toyed with him and called him all sorts of names: Rhadamanthus and Aristarchus and arrant blockhead and fine old English gentleman. At any rate, he has got publicity, full measure, pressed down and running over. It is the police I commiserate. The "grand" words have probably not been chosen for their grandeur, have not been chosen at all, but imposed on them among the traditions of the force. They are part of an official code, which is, almost necessarily, as uniform as their official dress. A constable on duty behaves more stiffly than when he is off it, and it seems right that he should speak more stiffly, too; the free and easy language of his domestic hearth would be incongruous with the solemnity of a police court. It is all very well for the magistrate, a gentleman of liberal education and refined taste, to speak the same

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language in court as out of it; he has had advantages denied to the policeman, who must be taught an artificial lingo for public use.

For it is a mistake to suppose that the natural English of the unliterary Englishman is necessarily good English. It will contain many a good homely idiom, to be sure, many of the fundamental elements of the mother-tongue, but it will also be full of the slang and current *clichés* of the day—the result of unconscious imitation. In a word, it will be vulgar. It will not be the simple, nervous English of Swift—which I suppose would be the model approved by our magistrate who objects to “grand” words—but an amalgam of the twentieth-century equivalent for that with the catch words of the crowd and phrases picked up from those cheap publications for the illiterate by the illiterate which Mr. H. G. Wells so strangely admires.

And this, I submit, accounts for the stilted English of our Public Offices. Give the natural man a free hand and he will draft an idiomatic minute or letter, but not without incongruous colloquialisms and lapses of taste which would be no less unseemly in a minor official document than in the most important of State papers. Besides, there is the obvious need for impersonality; a marked individual style—the most precious thing in pure literature—is quite unsuitable for documents issued by the collective entity of a Government Department. And so a system of prescribed phrases and orthodox formulas

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grows up, or, rather, is handed down from generation to generation. It may be stiff, it may be archaie, but the point is that it is safe. It curbs the exuberance of the juniors, supplies the inarticulate with a ready-made instrument of expression, and offers the greyer heads an ingenious exercise in the adaptation of old phrases to new patterns. Of course, there are pedants in high places whose prejudices and reservations plague their subordinates. And there is a class of minds that run so naturally to the stereotype as to produce a burlesque of the official language. But on the whole I think it must be conceded that our Government Departments have attained a respectable standard of English. What helps most, I fancy, to keep up the standard is that your MS. has to run the gauntlet of criticism from several other people—an excellent security for the sound “humdrum” which the old East India director told the ambitious recruit was the style they preferred in official papers. In literature, of course, it would be an abomination.

And we must not forget that in official as in all other prose there has been within the past half-century a continual process of simplification. Trollope’s Sir Huffle Buffle wrote much more pompously than any modern head of a Department. “How do you say ‘good fellow’ in print?” asked a leader-writer of the great *Delane*. “Sir,” was the reply, “you should not say it at all!” That was the mid-Victorian note. Nobody would be surprised to find

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“good fellow” in the leader-page of *The Times* of to-day. Yet public bodies must always move a little more cautiously than private. Hence it comes about that journalists poke fun at Government Office English, and a magistrate girds at the police for their “grand words.” For my part, I would jealously preserve every variety of professional speech, as I would every variety of professional garb and etiquette. They attest the reality of history and add to the fun of life.

COMPULSORY IGNORANCE

IT is Dr. Mackail's delicious phrase. In the course of his presidential address last week to the members of the Classical Association he said :—" ' Compulsory Greek and Latin ' was a phrase as irrelevant as ' compulsory warmth and light.' Such things were not compulsory, they were only necessary. But it was their business to endeavour that there should be, so far as possible, no compulsory ignorance of them." The word " compulsory " reminds me of a story told by, or of, Charles Buller, a great wit in his distant Victorian day, now perhaps forgotten. " Depend upon it," said one, " the nation will have to choose between compulsory religion and no religion at all," to which the other replied, " The distinction is too fine for me to grasp." But this also is irrelevant. It will not, however, be irrelevant politely to remind Dr. Mackail that for the world at large, in the matter not only of the Latin and Greek classics but of all classics—in a word, of all the best literature—compulsory ignorance must be the rule. Whatever the endeavours (odious endeavours ! said Millamant) of our pastors and masters, they can have no appreciable effect on the great workaday ignorant world. Even in the seminaries of the select, where

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those endeavours have their ideal field, they fail more often than not. It has been said of Eton boys that if they didn't exactly learn Latin and Greek, at least they left school with a profound conviction that there *were* such languages. What was it Swift said of the classics? Many men treat them as they treat lords. They learn their titles, and then boast of their acquaintance. But the vast majority of men ("not forgetting" women) do not pay them even that homage. They have never heard of them. Their ignorance is compulsory.

I would like to put in a humble plea for my fellow-creatures, the countless millions of the population of the earth who do not read the classics, and who never will. I am not referring to the people who never read anything (though it might be a salutary discipline to consider their case); I speak of the countless millions of readers. I mean the warm, palpitating, buying and selling, loving and hating mass of humanity that reads **Dell** but not **Dante**, **Oppenheim** but not **Schopenhauer**, **Nat Gould** but not **Dan Chaueer**. It is of no use distinguishing the one sort of reading as classic and the other as trash. For the world in general prefers to read what some call trash. I have lately been dipping into "Letters from an Ocean Tramp," an early work (1908) of a distinguished writer, Mr. William McFee, who has now become well known for that fine novel, "Command." And this is what he says of the mereantile marine: "We speak glibly of the world-wide fame

COMPULSORY IGNORANCE

of some classic, when, in point of fact, the people familiar with that classic are isolated specks in the vast, solid mass to whom some novelettist is a household god. The classic will have, say, one votary in the family, the novelettist will capture the family *en bloc*. An engineer will receive a cargo of novelettes, all of which have been digested, or even feverishly devoured, by his mother, wife, or sisters. He will pass them on to the steward, who will read them and give them to the sailors and firemen. And this obtains in every ship wherever the English language is spoken. What classic can claim a public that does not seem microscopic compared to this?" Mr. McFee calls this "intellectual drug-taking"—surely a harsh word? The sailors and firemen are merely reading for pleasure, which is the only sensible way of reading. How many readers of the classics can be said to do this? If you can "read Plato with your feet on the fender," do. But if you only read him as a duty, with a Liddell and Scott at your elbow, you must be having a thin time, making a poor thing of life.

Plato and the fender suggest, of course, Macaulay, who also read, notoriously, every novel he could lay his hands on, the trashier the better. Walter Bagehot quotes from him a well-known passage about the classics, and the advantage of their being dead. "With the dead there is no rivalry. In the dead there is no change. Plato is never sullen. Cervantes is never petulant. Demosthenes never

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comes unseasonably. Dante never stays too long. No difference of political opinion can alienate Cicero. No heresy can excite the horror of Bossuet." Bagehot, characteristically, puts the other case. "But Bossuet is dead; and Cicero was a Roman; and Plato wrote in Greek. Years and manners separate us from the great. After dinner, Demosthenes *may* come unseasonably; Dante *might* stay too long. Dreadful idea, having Demosthenes for an intimate friend! He had pebbles in his mouth; he was always urging action; he spoke such good Greek; we cannot dwell on it—it is too much. Only a mind impassive to our daily life, unalive to bores and evils, to joys and sorrows, incapable of the deepest sympathies, a prey to print, could imagine it. The mass of men have stronger ties and warmer hopes. We require to love and hate, to act and live."

Quite so, and I believe this aloofness of the classics, their remoteness from our daily life, makes men afraid of them. The fear comes from ignorance, if you will, but it is ignorance that circumstances make compulsory for the vast majority of the human race. Even the modest amount of toil that enables them to learn that Balbus built a wall, or that Cæsar divided Gaul into three parts, or that certain Anabasic Greeks marched four parasangs is beyond their opportunities. And the information, when acquired, would seem to them unexciting. Whereas, without toil and for a shilling or two, they may learn what Louis, the *mattre d'hôtel* at the

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Milan, whispered to the distinguished-looking Ambassador of a first-class foreign Power, and how the slow drip-drip from the floor of the taxicab turned out to be human gore. Tell them that this information is trash, that the classics would do them much more good, and they will only regard the classics with a fiercer dislike than ever. Classics are for the "happy few," for Dr. Mackail and the Classical Association. Mankind in general constitute a huge Unclassical Association, which prefers to read trash. So runs the world away.

THE COMPLETE HOUSE-AGENT

EVERY reader of *The Times* with a particle of imagination must turn every morning with renewed delight to those final pages of the paper which announce, in glowing language and often with fascinating pictorial embellishments, forthcoming sales of houses and estates. The counties in which are situate these "well-appointed" residences are so "glorious," they themselves are so "attractive," so "desirable," so "charming," or so "full of oak beams," their gardens are so "old world," their bathrooms are so engagingly "h. and c."! I think there is no more romantic reading in the whole paper. It makes no difference that you have a house of your own, which you have no intention of leaving. Indeed, the familiar Lucretian sentiment in that case gives added zest to your reading that so many houses are in the market "with vacant possession," or "ready to step into." In imagination you can step into them all, and note with an antiquarian thrill where the mediæval priory or the Elizabethan manor house has been linked on to the Queen Anne or Georgian additions. Just fancy, then, the ecstatic condition of the house-agent who has himself "personally inspected" and who now "recommends"

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these historie properties, after counting the old oak beams and seeing with his own eyes the Adams mantelpieees. The worst of it is, he must get so *blasé* amid so much historical and architeetural perfection ; for even palaees pall, and oak-panelled square halls may come to seem oppressively reetangular.

Nevertheless, take it all round, the house-agent's must be one of the most entraneing of all human oocupations. And, I surmise, one of the most exaeting. For you must be much of an architeet, a bit of an engineer, something of a lawyer, and a good deal of a novelist, rolled into one. I expeet this complexity of the business is the only thing that stems the rush to enter it. It is not for the likes of me to enter into the delieate question of its peeuniary emoluments, but it often puzzles me to think how the agents can ever let these desirable properties go out of their hands, why they don't buy them straightway and live in them themselves. "I wonder what the vintners buy One-half so preeious as the stuff they sell." As things are, there is always a "market." It is not only that houseowners die or (as after the war) are plunged into sudden poverty ; the great nomadie instinet is ever at work.

Nattre, vivre, et mourir dans la même maison, was the aspiration of the French poet ; but few people share it, or what would beecome of the house-agents ?

It is odd that house-agents should so seldom be chosen as the heroes of popular novels. Especially odd, when you consider their exeptional oppor-

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tunities for being connected with haunted houses, concealed chambers, ghosts, and the like. But there is a fashion in these things. An instructive paper might be written "On favourite professions in Fiction." In the middle of the last century the good young men in Augier and Dumas *films* used invariably to be engineers. Since then heroic doctors, barristers, soldiers, and even journalists, have been two a penny. But no house-agent *pour un sou*. There is an architect in Mr. Hardy's "Laodicean"—which is getting warm, as the children say. Also there is a surveyor, as well as an auctioneer, in "Middlemarch," but both of them are subaltern characters. Of regular, pukka house-agents in fiction I can call to mind only one, and he is the eponymous hero of Mr. Sinclair Lewis's "Babbitt." Being an American, he is called a real estate agent, but prefers to call himself a "Realtor." The author throws more light on the man than on his profession. After all, it must be poor fun being a house-agent in a country where there are no genuine Elizabethan manor houses, and no old oak beams.

I have said that the perfect house-agent should have a good deal of the novelist in him. I mean for his advertisements. There are many good opening chapters of novels in the back page of *The Times*. Think how Balzac would have revelled in them, and expanded them into a score of pages, meticulously noting every detail of the walls, roofs, windows, "messuages, and other tenements," and

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inventorying every stick of furniture, down to the three-legged chair cast away in the lumber-room ! To the unfortunates who read Balzac " for the story," these preliminary descriptions are a weariness of the flesh. Evidently, if he had not elected to be a great novelist, he would have made a great house-agent.

But in description our own perfect house-agent's weakness—if I may hint at a weakness—is for stereotypes. These, of course, are the darling sin of all technical language. Often enough they are its virtue. " Technical language," says Mr. Conrad (gibing at the journalists who speak of " casting " anchor), " is an instrument wrought into perfection by ages of experience, a flawless thing for its purpose." True for sailors, who never waste words. True, too, for house-agents when they use such convenient, if ugly, abbreviations as " vacant possession." But I can see no convenience to excuse the ugliness of some of their stereotypes. Why should every little house be " Bijou " ? Why should a house with the best situation in Belgravia have the " premier position " there ? Why should every house not in a row or with something distinctive about it become " a house of character " ? And why should all old gardens be " old world " ? These *clichés* tend to spoil my back page for me. Every house-agent (Swift went further, and said every man) should write his own English. I merely offer this as a humble suggestion. One must not presume to dictate to advertisers.

THE SENSE OF HUMOUR

A SCIENTIFIC authority told me the other day that there was only one absolute dichotomy of the human race. The ordinary divisions—male and female, black and white, fair and dark, etc.—are, of course, not absolute. They are only extreme grades of a continuous series. There are men, women, and hermaphrodites, niggers, white men, and the various half-castes, and so forth. But scientific research has discovered one absolute distinction. Our bodies fall into one or other of two great classes according to the direction of the electric current within them. Mine may flow from left to right, yours from right to left; that difference between us is unalterable. Unless my scientific friend was pulling my (lamentably unscientific) leg, that strikes me as a remarkable fact. Is there any analogue in the non-physical world? Obviously the suggested divisions of mankind into Aristotelians and Platonists, borrowers and lenders, fools and d——d fools, and so forth, do not pretend to be absolute. I cannot help thinking that mankind may be divided into two categories, which never overlap and have no intermediate gradations,

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according as they have or have not a sense of humour. The humorist cannot part with his distinguishing quality. The non-humorist or anti-humorist cannot acquire it. It is true, we may say, politely, that So-and-so has a moderate sense of humour, but we really mean that he has none. Humour is the touchstone of our literary affections. Why do we admire Shakespeare ? Because he wrote *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and other great plays. Why do we love him ? Because of his humour ; because he invented Falstaff, a rogue, a coward, and a drunkard, but a miracle of humour ; because he could not show us a tyrant like Richard III., a monster like Caliban, or a villain like Iago without also showing him to us as humorous. We admire Milton, but because he had no humour we cannot love him. Ditto, Wordsworth. When I say " we " I mean, of course, those of us who have a sense of humour. There may be lovers of Milton and Wordsworth, but they belong, in the Thackerayan phrase, to the other shop.

The most signal instance, I suppose, is Shelley's. He is the darling of the humorless. If Shelley had had a spark of humour he could never have lived the astonishing life he did. Indeed, only to read that life in M. Maurois's recent "*Ariel*," where it is recounted fairly enough, but seen through the eyes of a humorist, is to have a shock. For the true Shelleyite, or anti-humorist, such treatment of the sacred theme is "vulgar." Says the authoress of

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“Shelley and the Unromantics,” “The same unfortunate tendency to misrepresent and vulgarize the poet is very marked in M. Maurois’s witty but partly fictitious study ‘Ariel,’ which has appeared while the present work was in the press.” You feel it was inevitable that Mrs. Ward Campbell should say this. She and M. Maurois do not belong to the same world; their electric currents run in opposite directions. And yet this “Shelley and the Unromantics” is one of the best books about Shelley, if not the best, ever written. Because it is a book not only of exhaustive knowledge, but of perfect sympathy. It is admirably written, too, after the trenchant style of Mr. Lytton Strachey. But there is a world of difference between the two authors. Mr. Strachey had a strong sense of humour, whereas Mrs. Campbell apparently has none.

She has all the fine qualities that are the compensation of the humorless—earnestness, sincerity, enthusiasm, a passion for truth, a lofty idealism, a delicate ear for poetry. Evidently, too, she is in love with Shelley. She writes of the various women who gyrated round Shelley, or round whom Shelley gyrated—*quas numerare non oportet*—almost with the acerbity of a jealous rival. She can hardly forgive poor Mary for having often felt both lonely and dull in Shelley’s company. “The nose and mouth” (in Stump’s portrait) “are sharp, and the lips very thin and set.” She carefully notes Harriet’s love of shopping and smart bonnets; of Miss

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Hitchener, "the silliness and vanity with which a woman ten years his senior was encouraging his error"; of Emilia Viviani, the obvious "attempt to insinuate herself between husband and wife, and enjoy the diversion of a little irregular love affair," and the fact that "she also enriched herself by gifts and money at their expense." Characteristically feminine, these caresses, you think. Yet you must remember there is chapter and verse for every one of them.

Her catalogue of Shelley's men friends is characteristic, too. Wives and sweethearts, actual or posthumous, have a notorious prejudice against their loved one's men friends. Mrs. Ward Campbell says: "The chief of them are seven in number, and telling them over is like calling for a march past of the Seven Deadly Sins. There is Trelawny, with his irredeemable vanity and raging temper; the covetous Godwin, the lecherous Byron, the slipshod Hunt, the sly Medwin, the disdainful Peacock, and the gluttonous Hogg." If a man is to be known by his friends, this collection of epithets would give a nice character to Shelley! But allowance must be made for unconscious pique. It cannot be gainsaid that Byron was lecherous (almost as lecherous as that buccaneering blackguard Trelawny), but was he nothing else? We seem to have heard he was a poet of sorts. No doubt Peacock could be disdainful *à ses heures*, disdainful of folly and affectation and rabid enthusiasm. But was he nothing else? Yes,

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he had the humorous temperament, and was a thorn in the sides of the humorless. That is his real offence. He would keep laughing, the wretch, and in "Nightmare Abbey" had the impudence to laugh even at the great, the only, the darling P. B. S.! "He even laughed a little there and then" (*i.e.*, in the society of the ridiculous Boinvilles) "and made Harriet Shelley laugh, too. Shelley forgave him. . . ." This, I suppose, is evidence of what is called on another page the "natural magnanimity" of Shelley. Poor Harriet! It is pleasant to think she got a laugh or two in her miserable life, and through Peacock. But Peacock went on laughing, and Shelley couldn't see the joke. Did he ever see any joke? "What could the poet make of . . . romance, which, just as it was putting on the richness of the fervent Romantics, shrivelled up into a burst of laughter?" Laughter, you see, is merely a shrivelling up, something of which the humorless are "disdainful." And so we come back to our old dichotomy of the humorous and the humorless—who might equally well be labelled Peacockians and Shelleyites. They are eternally apart. They will never understand one another. I am quite willing to admit, if you insist, that I do not understand everything in "Shelley and the Unromantics." But it has been a real treat to read it.

THE TIME SENSE

THE time sense is like the bump of locality, a gift of nature, a birthright, a bit of luck. I believe the sense to be rarer than the bump. More people, that is to say, know where they are than when. This belief of mine is supported by the notorious fact that the unhappy ones who don't know their place seem spontaneously to bring into being an opposite set—the positive pole to their negative—who declare it high time they were taught it. The declaration is made with a punitive severity, and its Baconian revenge postures as a kind of wild justice.

Evidently, then, it is your duty to know where you are. But ignorance of when you are is more indulgently treated. Contemporaries practise little if any inter-communication on the subject ; a furtive glance at the bottom button of one another's waistcoats saves all discussion. Impetuous youth will sometimes give age a gentle reminder, delicately veiling the pathos of the situation under the deferential surrender of a chair or a scrupulous interjection of " Sir's." Stung to retaliate, and often purple in the face, crabbed age remembers that it has its dignity to preserve and is silent. The reminders, when staled by repetition, are let pass as a stupid

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but, it would seem, inevitable misunderstanding, as part of some farcical ritual in a queer world ; but the first one gives a sharp shock. It reveals to the senior that he and his junior do not share the same time sense, are not of the same mind about the Heraclitean flux of all things. Are we to account for this in the fearless old fashion, by distinguishing between subjective and objective ? Are we to say that the senior has been too absorbed in the business of living to notice that it has taken time ? Even so, is he not aware of a *qualitative* difference between the present and all the previous moments, just because it is the outcome of them all and its colour a blend of all their hues ? Only, I think, if he has a morbid fancy for self-analysis ; the normal man finds the continuous sequence of sensations and emotions which we call life quite interesting enough without comparing the quality of new and old.

And so one is surprised to find a " legend " springing up about this or that decade one happens to have lived through, a special stamp put upon it, as though life then were distinct from life now, and the people who lived it (to empty out the whole thought of the legend-makers) rather mad. Now it never occurred to you that that decade was so different from other decades, it was just a part of the continuous sequence of experience. Looking back, you remember that your wife wore a princess bonnet and sleeves puffed at the shoulder, that you might run against Pater any day in B.N.C. or Kensington

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High Street, and you can still whistle the tune of "Her golden hair was hanging down her baek." Well, bonnets disappeared and sleeves altered, a day came when you could no longer meet Pater, there was another music-hall tune; but the world was much the same as ever, there was no "solution of continuity." But to-day those times have become "legendary." People have invented an imaginary "Nineties" (sometimes called, I think, the "Wicked Nineties"), which I find quite unrecognizable. That, I daresay, is because I lack the time sense.

I have been much struck by the force and fineness of this sense in Mr. Osbert Sitwell's "Triple Fugue." Mr. Sitwell is notoriously a young man—are not he and his brother Sacheverell among the most prominent of *les jeunes*?—and for a young man there is always a certain glamour about the period of history just preceding his birth. I used to feel it myself about the First Great Exhibition period—till Mr. Strachey took the gilt off the gingerbread for me. Mr. Sitwell feels it about the eighties.

To us children of sadder and wiser days the eighties of the last century seem a halcyon but ever so distant age; Alfred Lord Tennyson ever so much more distant than King Alfred burning the cakes; the young manhood of Mr. Arthur Balfour ever so much more remote, more legendary, than the youth of King Arthur or the Quest of the Holy Grail. A halcyon time indeed, with spring always in the warm crystal-clear air; with the laburnums, the lilacs, the lobelias, and copper beeches in a perpetual riot of unsubdued and unbridled colour. There was a continual movement and sparkle in the lives of the well-to-do . . .

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and, to those who liked it, there was a pleasant stir in the world of art. Painting and prose were both stretching themselves after a long sleep that had been broken only by the short pre-Raphaelite nightmare. This was the time of the neo-Greek : white marble mantelpieces, Alma Tadema, the prose of John Addington Symonds, the drawings of Du Maurier and Frank Miles—all were supposed, rather vaguely, to recall, to equal even, the art of Phidias. Bustles, bonnets, straight profiles and diamond myrtle leaves were the order of the day. For the more precious there were water-lilies, almond blossom, and flowing draperies ; for the very knowing, chatter about Whistler and Walter Pater.

Note the subtle touch of “ diamond myrtle leaves.” But Mr. Sitwell has fallen into an error, venial enough, about the laburnums, lilacs, etc. ; they were not so good in the eighties as they are to-day. The colours of lilae, for instance, have annually become more unsubdued and unbridled, thanks mainly to M. Lemoine.

Mr. Sitwell is chronologically precise. He divides the nineties into “ early ” and “ late.” In the “ early,” it seems, Oppoponax and White Rose gave way to “ Chypre ” and “ New Mown Hay ” ; eigarettes were allowed in drawing-rooms, and brown leather shoes came in. In the “ late ”

two traditions strove and clashed together in the drawing-rooms of artistic ladies, for the shadow of the Celtic twilight, destined later to attain the density of a London fog, already lay heavy on the suburbs, and the voice of Cuchulain was uplifted in Liberty’s Drapery Department, or wailed through Soho ; while older, but competing with it, although perhaps already a little losing ground, was the influence of Ernest Dowson. In many gatherings of “ modern young people ” the mist wafted from the Land of Heart’s Desire would be rent in twain, as an even then slightly old-fashioned “ advanced ” young woman would rise to

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thunder "Cynara," or a romantic-looking young undergraduate from Oxford would proclaim, and reiterate, that he had been faithful to the lady in his own fashion. Alas! These things are altered; the daughter of the "advanced" young woman, her hair cut short like a pony's mane, now plays the more intricate game of complex-and-inhibition with the romantic young man's son (who, like all the young men of to-day, has a post on the League of Nations), and the leaden weight of the *London Mercury* now rests on those slender tables upon which had once been laid the grotesque beauty of Beardsley's drawings.

There you have a poet's side-light on the history of poetry—continued to a still later date elsewhere as follows :—

By this time the world of the late nineties had passed with the Boer War, and we soon find ourselves in mid-Edwardian days. The neo-classic form of verse, though still surviving—like everything else—at the universities, was dead elsewhere; the Irish twilight was beginning to deepen into night; and signs began to appear of a modern movement in English poetry, similar to that which had blossomed in France through the last few decades of the old century.

You see, Mr. Sitwell's time sense misses nothing—diamond myrtle leaves, brown shoes, Oppoponax, Frank Miles, "Cynara," and the Celtic Twilight. And to think that I have gone through all these vicissitudes almost without knowing it!

TRIP-CLIP-CLOPPING

“And now we are trip-clip-clopping, trip-clip-clopping, up through the leafy bowers of Campden Hill. . . .” Isn’t it a good onomatopoeia? Don’t you feel you are swinging along the asphalted road in your hansom and hear the whack, whack of its double doors thrown open as you get out at the top of Campden Hill, where there was then a little more elbow room than there is now? It is one of many last century echoes that reverberate in the pages of “A Nineteenth Century Childhood,” by Mrs. Desmond MacCarthy. But, on the whole, I think, Mrs. MacCarthy has given us less of a “period” book than you might expect from the title. So much the better, say I, for I am beginning to be a little weary of those everlasting topics, the Victorianism of the Victorians and the alleged naughtiness of the nineties. The good people who are so sensitive to the “old-fashioned” and the “out-of-date” seem to me to be simply lacking in the historical sense. They have no eye for the continuity of the human race and need Burke’s reminder that we are not “the flies of a summer.” To let your attention be absorbed by superficial differences is to be yourself superficial. And so I am glad that

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Mrs. MacCarthy has not written her reminiscences of the eighties and nineties as though she were introducing us to prehistoric times, bewildering in their strangeness and almost incredible to readers of to-day. Even the queer things she does note as characteristic of the time will, we fancy, by and by look quite simple and natural and in their inevitable place to the philosophic historian. They admired Tennyson, these benighted ones. Well, why on earth shouldn't they? It was once "old-fashioned" to admire Dryden and Pope. They are still read by people who care more for poetry than for fashions. "The vagueness of Mr. Jowett's sermons was welcome to all." Not, perhaps, so welcome as Mrs. MacCarthy supposes to undergraduates compelled to listen to them in chapel in the Master's piping tones. Nor was vagueness in sermons peculiar to that age. Evidently, Mrs. MacCarthy is hard put to it to get together her few bits of temporal colour.

Soon, in our shimmering white or pink satins, with our long white kid gloves, elegant waists and sprays of flowers on the left side of our bodices, our hair coiled on the nape of our necks or on the top of our heads, our trains first switching about our feet, then gracefully caught up and managed, we fall with our partners into the swinging rhythm of that old "Blue Danube" waltz.

Happy Victorians, dance away! I "listened in" to that same "Blue Danube" the other night, and was entranced. I recommend it to the Savoy Orpheans, just for a change.

What is much more exciting to the male reader

• STILL MORE PREJUDICE

of Mrs. MacCarthy's book than these Victorian reminiscences is its glimpses into a permanent mystery of humanity, the nature of a young woman's mind. Most young women either can't or won't tell. No father ever really understands his own daughter. It may be that their mind is vague like one of Mr. Jowett's sermons—*animula vagula, blandula*—or, perhaps, simply silly, and, with the instinct of their sex for concealment, they keep it dark. We have to fall back on that modern confessional box, the novel. Women give themselves away in their fictitious heroines. If you want to know what Miss Austen's mind was like, see the histories of Miss Fanny Price, Miss Catherine Morland, and Miss Elizabeth Bennet. No man could have invented these girls. They say that Juliet and Rosalind and Imogen are true women, but I don't believe it. They are charming figments of the male imagination about women—a very different matter. But the difficulty about even the realistic heroines of women's novels is that they are *touched up*. Like Jane Bennet, they smile too much. They know the male eye is upon them, and behave accordingly.

A kind of half-way house between fiction and fact is supplied by George Sand's "*Histoire de ma Vie*." Here you have the portrait of a young woman's mind, only slightly flattered. George's escapades at her convent school, her wild childhood in Berri torn between the jealous rivalries of her aristocratic grandmother and her plebeian mother—

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here you seem to be brought very near a real woman. But she and Mrs. MacCarthy are at opposite ends of the nineteenth century. Mrs. MacCarthy also seems to have had her convent school escapades, milder and indeed (how else under Victoria?) entirely respectable.

"That's the House of Pity we are passing now," my partner said.

"What's that?" I asked.

"Oh, where the penitents are," she said mysteriously.

"What are they?"

"Oh, bad women," said Mabel Parsley. "They do laundry work and are trained there."

"Oh," I said.

I had never heard of a harlot, so I supposed they had stolen things, or perhaps slaughtered people in tempers.

There was a fast set at the school (as there was at George Sand's, by the way), and she joined it for a time. "Kathleen, Lucy, and Polly were noisy and daring; Christabel and Beryl were deceitful and vain." They all cultivated "the Cherub," a good-looking choir-boy. "Two of the set had corresponded with the Cherub for some time and he had responded, being careful not to say which of them he loved best." Another young lady, *not* a member of the fast set:

had a love correspondence with a medical student at Bart.'s and firmly licked up her envelopes, which, by the rules of our prison, she ought to have left open for inspection. She had "only written to an old doctor friend of her father's," she said when at last Sister Mary Elizabeth swept ever so gently and kindly up to her to make a little deprecating inquiry as to why so strict a rule had been broken.

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Evidently, then, *some* schoolgirls are precocious flirts and accomplished liars. Mrs. MacCarthy herself confesses, very prettily, to an early *amourette*. But the true inwardness (to use a nineteenth century expression) of her mind she seldom reveals. She is observant, or rather, receptive of impressions—and as her impressions are of Eton (where her father had a house) and Windsor, they are entitled to be called distinguished. It must have been a strange experience for a houseful of girls in the cloisters of Eton, bang up against “our young barbarians, all at play.” The young barbarians, of course, behaved like perfect gentlemen, though sister “Evelina was always in love with one of the Eleven, and I teased her because she was pleased when her acquaintanceship with one particular swell involved the taking off of six hats of six swells walking abreast.” Evelina got in a most effective retort: “But you know you get as red as a turkey-cock whenever we meet Dash Major.” Not the least charming thing in the book is the picture of the author’s mother, who must have been a delightful woman. She would take a young Colleger into the garden and read *Sainte-Beuve* to him. “So fascinating reading to Mr. —,” she says presently on re-entering the room. “He understands every *nuance*.” Can Mr. — have been Maurice Baring, who is mentioned as a friend of the family? No, now I think of it, “C.,” that fascinating book which gives Eton from the boy’s point of view as this one does from the girl’s, shows

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that Mr. Baring was not a Colleger. "In the 19th century," says Mrs. MacCarthy, "you always hoped to be noble under all circumstances, and if you were not aspiring you were daunted with a sense of your shortcomings. But the weakness of my position lay in the fact that I was by nature a born amateur." There is, to my mind, nothing amateurish about this engaging little volume.

FAREWELL TO A FRIEND

Is it not in *The Wrong Box* that some one sits down at the piano and improvises a "Capriceio in B flat on the departure of a friend"? I wish he would sit down at my piano and do it again. For I have been watching the departure of a friend which called aloud for the accompaniment of a little commemorative music. Not that our friendship had been of long duration. My vision of her was intermittent. But, however one might move about oneself, one had the comfort of knowing she was always there. When I rose in the morning, she was almost the first thing that met my eyes. When I returned home after a few days' absence, there she was patiently waiting to be admired; I would get my first glimpse of her—or the top of her—nearly five miles off. She had a slim elegance, and was now black, now white, and sometimes parti-coloured. She would change her hue, in fact, at the caprice of the noble duke, her owner, who was always changing his mind about the colour she looked best in. This mutability of taste provided me with a series of "new thrills" about her; there was no custom to stale her infinite variety.

She had, of course, like most lovable things, a

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“past”; it had been spent, I was told, in the South American trade. But now she was a duke’s sailing yacht, an aristocrat of the seas, proudly flaunting her four masts in a port where two are generally esteemed the limit of extravagance. She had been with us for many weeks, refitting, repainting, and regilding (I do not apologize for the active participle, which has the authority of Jane Austen). Most of the natives had been employed aboard her, and came ashore with astonishing tales—a little embroidered perhaps (the seashore greatly favours the mythopœic faculty)—of the fantastic luxury within. One gathered that the duke was fertile in whim. Perhaps there was the old explanation, *cherchez la femme*. Anyhow, the *Flying Foam* was the glory of our little port; the centre of its legend; the chief topic at the local inn, which ought to be kept by W. W. Jacobs and no other; and, finally, a “godsend” to the prosperity of the town.

For she has, like other slim and elegant beauties, her economic aspect. Our little port, which sent no fewer than five ships against the Armada, is nowadays a famous yachting centre. Virtually the whole population (not counting a minority who go fishing and bring back nothing you can buy in the town) live on yachting, afloat or ashore. They build, refit, man, and command yachts. Our late Mayor was captain of the yacht that nearly won the Cup from the Yankees. Since the war, as everybody knows,

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yachting has become a terribly expensive sport, and some two or three hundred, I am told, of our natives have lost their job. Imagine the effect of the *Flying Foam's* arrival on the town! Many thousands to be spent on her, and all for our men, who are the most skilled of all men at yacht work, who are the depositories of uncanny secrets about it, who have it in the blood! Mutual congratulations must have passed like those exchanged between the daughters of joy when Bolingbroke was made a Minister: "Seven thousand a year, dear, and all for us!" When the *Flying Foam* departed for a South Coast port, she was filled with our artificers, for the like of them was not to be found anywhere on any mere South Coast. For the time being the number of our unemployed has dwindled to a minimum, the pastry-cook in the High Street has again found cream buns worth while, and the improvement in our Sunday best dazzles the eye.

But it is not the economic aspect of my friend that entrances me so much as the romance of her. It is not the amount of money spent on her, but the fact that it was spent royally, or to speak by the card ducally—spent carelessly, capriciously, romantically. Cabins were put up, taken down and put up again, coloured and re-coloured, hung and rehung. Whole services of porcelain were suddenly cast aside and superseded by a set yet more costly. All this is in the grandiose tradition appropriate to an aristocrat of the seas. "Eccentricity," said the talkative Mr.

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Scogan at Crome, "is the justification of all aristocracies." It was a new sensation to have this eccentric creature lying hard by in the offing, innocent enough to look at, harmonizing with the quiet flat shore, the Martello tower, and the little spit of sand where a handful of bathers keep cabins in the summer and try to make believe they are at a fashionable watering-place ; it was a new sensation to feel that this placid scene could reveal, if probed by the curious, a gorgeous mystery, a kind of floating Aladdin's cave. If I never went aboard the yacht, it was because I knew that romance only loses by being explored and explained. No, it was better to look at her out there, and to let the imagination play freely round her. As she swung at anchor, now broadside on, now foreshortened with her masts melted into one, you saw the little tug taking aboard parties of high importance from town—agents and secretaries and, for all I know, dukes and duchesses, no doubt attended by a little crowd of "retainers." Well, they had their reward ; for them she was a means of subsistence, or a home, or a toy. For me, from my window, she was just a friend, a familiar component of the natural scene, as regular a part of it as the gulls circling above the marsh and the estuary, or as the ebb and flow of the tide.

She left at three of the afternoon, not, as I had hoped, under canvas, but propelled by some auxiliary engine. I followed her four masts along the line of

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anchored trawlers and then straight out to sea until they dwindled at the horizon. The glory has departed. I have lost my friend. Farewell, then, *Flying Foam*—in the phrase Carlyle addressed to Sir Walter, “take our proud and sad farewell!”

ON READING THE PAPER

THE bare boughs are filigreed against the silver streak of the river. The sun, that only a few months ago sank into the wood, now sets a long way to the east of it and seems as though it were furtively making for the open sea on some seeret maritime quest of its own. But I must not go on in this vein or I shall have my friend "Q" (as he used to eall himself—and a much more convenient name, too, than Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch) upbraiding me for "Coekney transports." In his lately republished "Adventures in Critieism" he applies the method in sport to the Brompton Road :—

Here and there along the street Grocery Stores and shops of Italian warehousemen may be observed, opened here as branches of bigger establishments in the City. Three gilt balls may occasionally be seen hanging out under the first-floor windows of a pawnbroker's residence. House agents, too, are not uncommon along the line of route.

My exeuse is that, without any newspaper to read, I have been looking out of window. We have had no newspapers for two whole days ; a serious breach in what Johnson ealled " the system of life."

I suppose there are as many reasons for reading newspapers as there are newspaper-readers. Proprietors, directors, managers, and others on the

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“Commercial” side, no doubt collect statistics about this. For my part, I can never understand the other people’s reason—I mean the other people in the same railway compartment. They seem to read such odd things. One man will turn first to the sporting news, another to the city article, a third will even go steadily through the advertisements. But though the object may vary, the manner of reading is always the same. Two or three pages are hastily turned over and skimmed with an air of boredom, then the thing is crumpled up and flung into a corner. The callousness of it! When I think of the vast output of intellectual (to mention no other) energy that has gone to the production of those pages of fair type now wrapped round a sandwich or used to rub a muddy boot! It brings home to you the vanity of human wishes and the futility of human effort.

The really dreadful thing is to sit opposite a reader who has turned to the page on which, you know, something of your own is printed. You regard him with sympathetic curiosity, though, to be sure, he doesn’t *look* the sort of man to read your article intelligently. Certainly you hadn’t *him* in your eye when you wrote it. Still, you never can tell, and genuine merit, however modest, will sometimes produce the right effect in the most unlikely quarters. Will his eye suddenly become fixed, his attention rapt? Will he break into the occasional smile that denotes the true connoisseur, the man of taste who

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knows English prose when he sees it ? Anyhow, you assure yourself that you don't care ; *quod scripsi, scripsi* is your motto ; you will look nonchalantly out of the carriage window and learn for the x th time that Monkey Brand will not Wash Clothes. As you learn it, the reader turns to his neighbour (so soon ! he *can't* have read it to the end) and says : " Good man ! Hobbs 115." You have made a little mistake about the page. And you were right about him after all ; he *is* a lewd fellow of the baser sort.

In the depth of the country, the absence of your daily paper for two successive mornings is a real privation. Your time-table is upset. You have positively no further excuse for not putting your study straight, in accordance with your solemn promise of a week ago. Besides, you have a vague feeling that all sorts of things are happening behind your back. As usual in life, the satisfaction of knowing is far outweighed by the dissatisfaction of *not* knowing.

Such is the strange lure of " news." Facts which are no business of yours, and which in no way concern your family or friends, have only to reach you as " news " to give you a peculiar thrill. What do you really care about a forest fire in Oklahoma which has caused damage to the extent of many million dollars ? Or about the perfect stranger in the " brief " paragraphs who has been elected mayor of Little Pedlington for the third time ? A week hence (if you can recall them) these will be for you

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mere facts and will leave you quite cold. To-day they are "news," and have a certain glamour. And yet the "news value"—which is, I believe, the consecrated expression for such items—is, I imagine, low down in the scale. They are isolated. They do not respond to any previous demand in the reader. I suppose the highest "news values" are events which combine the element of intrinsic importance or magnitude with the element of surprise, *e.g.*, outbreaks of war, revolutions, assassinations of the "great," earthquakes, discoveries, inventions. These offer the "dramatic" side of the world spectacle. But almost equally high value, I should guess, attaches to news which can be made continuous from day to day—the sort which American journalistic slang calls a "story"—and which keeps the reader's mind—once it has been prepared—on the tenter-hooks of curiosity as to what is going to happen next. It is in this category that "news" competes (and indeed occasionally coincides) with fiction, the criminal-hunt or the *cause célèbre* with the novel of Wilkie Collins or of Phillips Oppenheim. The discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb belonged to the first of these categories; the day-by-day instalments of further "finds" to the second.

And to the second belong what the French call "actualities." What is an "actuality"? Not necessarily something that has newly happened, but something that has newly excited and absorbed public attention. Examples: The "Mr. A." case,

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bobbed and shingled hair, Galli-Curci, Mr. Baldwin's pipe, the Prince of Wales *passim*. It is not merely the intrinsic interest of these topics that counts, but also the newspaper-reader's consciousness that he is sharing in an interest which is moving an enormous public of other readers. Indeed, the great authority on "collective psychology," Professor Tarde, holds that "the passion for actuality progresses with sociability, of which it is one of the most striking manifestations," and he sees a kind of association, brought about by "suggestion at a distance," between the regular readers of the same newspaper.

Perhaps it is by that process of suggestion that what is called "public opinion" is created among the readers of a newspaper. But enough. For the sun (with apologies to "Q") has long since gone down. The river has turned from silver to base lead. And to-morrow morning there will once more be the newspaper again.

“ LITTERY ” TALK

IN a preface by Octave Mirbeau to an English version of “ *Le Livre de Goha le Simple* ” there is a cry from the heart. “ I have had much to do with writers, and I feared to find my peaceful retreat invaded by literature. True, it does not irritate me as it once did, but it wearies me.”

No doubt they talk literature more persistently in Paris than we do in London. Their schoolboys are held hard at it by the scruff of the neck, in the hours when our own young barbarians are all at play. In adolescence they take their literary “ vocation ” very hard, and it sticks out all over them. Some of them even put “ *homme de lettres* ” on their cards before they have written (or rather printed) a line. If you see a particularly unkempt and down-at-heels customer in a Montmartre café it is ten to one you will be told he is a poet, and he often gets “ treated ” to drinks on that reputation. Even in the Faubourg St. Germain, if Marcel Proust’s account is to be trusted, they talk literature at dinner parties. According to the Goncourt Diary, at the reception of the Princess Mathilde they talked nothing else. No wonder poor M. Mirbeau is weary of it !

One must not, however, be in a hurry to declare

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that our state is the more gracious. It is true that with ourselves people who chatter bridge and golf far outnumber those who talk literature. But to these, if you don't happen to care about bridge and golf, it is easy to turn a deaf ear, whereas to the people who chatter literature you are simply compelled to listen. That is, if you have the slightest tincture of letters. For the nuisance about literature as a topic is that, in spite of yourself, you cannot shake off all curiosity about the opinions of your neighbours on your favourite authors, even when long experience has taught you that other people's opinions in the matter are sure to be worthless. Your taste may be soothed or outraged ; you may be stricken with sheer amazement at the ineptitude of the general judgment on current literature ; you may find your revered classics ignored and names you have never heard of lauded to the skies ; but listen you must, just as, with anything of a musical ear, you listen perforce to a barrel organ, although it is grinding out the most execrable tunes. The truth is, the fascination of literature is so potent as to leave you no choice when it is the topic of discussion ; you find it more irksome to refrain from listening than to hear the monstrous things you are, nine times out of ten, bound to hear. The result is, of course, disastrous. You are provoked into capping monstrosity by monstrosity, and another chapter is promptly added to the history of human folly.

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We are apt to think that more literature was talked in the eighteenth century than to-day, but that, I fancy, is because the records of such talk happen to be peculiarly abundant. Our Boswell misleads us. And if literature was their chief topic at the Club, we know of the very different subject that was encouraged at the Prime Minister's table, "because," as Sir Robert observed, "it was one in which everybody could join." In Swift's "Polite Conversation" literature never once gets started. Here again you find the same contrast between England and France. We know from Horace Walpole the amazing extent to which literature ("philosophy," they preferred to call it) was talked in the fashionable *salons* of the day, Mme. Geoffrin's and Mme. du Deffand's and Mlle. de Lespinasse's. Poor Horace got almost as weary of it as M. Mirbeau in our own day. For the other topic, Sir Robert's, it seems you had to sup with the actresses. The French Revolution appears to have changed the tone of conversation, as it changed everything else. Literature might still be discussed at Holland House and at Charles Lamb's evenings (it certainly was on the night when the Collector of Stamps pronounced Milton a great poet and Lamb demanded to "see the gentleman's bumps"), and perhaps in the "Modern Athens" (if the "Noctes Ambrosianæ" are any evidence); but from society at large it seems to have dropped out. There is hardly a reference to it in either Miss Austen's novels or her letters ;

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and Hazlitt's account of the general demeanour of the social crowd towards authors points to a universal philistinism. “ If any allusion was made to men of letters, there was a suppressed smile.”

Once more we have changed all that. We no longer indulge in suppressed smiles when allusion is made to men of letters ; we lick our lips and out with our opinions (or some one else's) about them, pat. I say some one else's because our opinions are less often of our own invention than the result of that imitative tendency which is called fashion. Obviously, fashionable opinions about literature are worthless, because literature addresses itself to individual tastes. I do not enjoy a novel because my neighbour likes it ; I may think I do, but what I really enjoy is not the novel but my sense of sympathy with my neighbour. The desire for social sympathy is a stronger force with most people than artistic taste. It is this fact that makes the fortune of “ best sellers ” and of popular plays. Readers and playgoers like to be on the side of the majority. Literary opinions not formed by fashion may be equally irrational : caprices, not judgments. We knew the author's mother, who was such a dear ; he is fond of cats, and so are we ; Aunt Maria dislikes him, which is enough to predispose anybody in his favour who knows Aunt Maria ; and so forth. But it is when you get among the authors themselves that the talk of literature becomes most futile. There is no such thing as a disinterested opinion

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among them. They warp everything to their own artistic individuality, and can only appreciate the style that is like their own. "Every eulogy," said Stendhal, "from colleague to colleague is a certificate of resemblance." I am speaking, of course, of the younger authors. The veterans, I imagine, do not talk literature at all. They agree with M. Mirbeau. It wearies them.

ACTORS' LOYALTIES

WRITING the other day about a new piece, I said that it would be a disquieting reflection to think what would happen to nonsensical plays if the actors were to let their critical sense overcome their loyalty to the author. What would, of course, happen would be the prompt conversion of the play into a burlesque of itself. Every silly speech would have attention drawn to its silliness by the actor's delivery; he would appear to be quoting, but quoting with ridicule, something by which he was wholly unconvinced himself. He would become, not an interpreter, but a mocker. I doubt if such a performance would be allowed to be completed, so great would be the scandal among the audience. For the same need for a certain make-believe in such matters is felt in front of the footlights as behind them. Let us at least affect, we say to ourselves, to give credence to what is passing on the stage, or the thing will never get played at all. It will be time to give vent to our disbelief and dissatisfaction when the curtain is down. And, we remember, the playhouse audience is a very mixed lot. My neighbour in the stalls may be convulsed with laughter over a hoary chestnut and dissolved in tears over obvious fustian, and the great

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heart of the people in the pit may be deeply touched by what is a vexation of spirit to the private boxes. Was it not at the Adelphi only a few years ago that the spectacle of a millionaire on the stage in a rich silk nightgown with a long train provoked loud laughter from the stalls, laughter rebuked by a scandalized hush-sh-sh from the pit, which obviously felt that this was just the kind of garment a millionaire might be expected to go to bed in ? There is, indeed, no kind of nonsense on the stage which will not pass muster with some fraction of the audience. One is reminded of Charles II.'s surmise as to why a certain absurd preacher of his day attracted such large congregations : " I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense."

It would be intolerable, then, if actors were to give themselves the air of saying " I know the lines the author has set down for me are absolute balderdash, as you may see from the way I deliver them." Their intelligence and taste may now and then be better than the author's, but we should resent their telling us so. As a rule, perhaps, there is little danger. The artificial world in which the players move is apt to resemble closely the artificial world which the dramatist likes to imagine ; " his nonsense suits their nonsense." Into that peculiar atmosphere a mind of philosophic detachment could only enter as a rank outsider, to be promptly ticketed " highbrow " and ejected with contumely. Please note that I speak of philosophic detachment,

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which is by no means a characteristic of the otherwise highly intellectual work of dramatists like Ibsen, Tchekov, and our own "G. B. S." It was once fondly thought (and said) that actors who had been trained in the plays of Ibsen would be so enlightened as never more to be able to present the usual personages of theatreland without repugnance and contemptuous laughter. For my part, I have observed no such result. The primary business of actors is to act, and many a player who won his spurs in Ibsen or Bernard Shaw has ever since cheerfully undertaken anything that came in his way, and been glad of the chance.

Evidently the actor's profession is not what Albert Smith's chemist called "a bed of *rosæ fol.*" Some of the demands made by the playwrights upon the loyalty and chivalry of their more intelligent "interpreters" must be a grievous burden. Let us, in our turn, pay homage to this noble army of martyrs. All the same, it is rather distressing to watch an actor declaiming stark, staring nonsense with, apparently, his whole heart and soul, and with the accents that seem to betoken profound conviction. It may, you conjecture, be mere appearance. It may be only accomplished acting, and behind that farrago of absurdity there may be concealed a mighty brain whose critical faculty is being deliberately put out of action for the nonce. It may be so; but one has one's uncomfortable doubts.

I have had similar doubts when I have watched a

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group of venerable club members listening to election results from the "loud speaker" in the intervals of jazz tunes from the Savoy band. How their faces light up when "another Conservative gain at ——" is announced! And how they pish and pshaw when the announcement is suddenly shifted to "Love is just a gamble" on the saxophone! It may be sincere concern for the welfare of the country. On the other hand, it may be simply a bad ear for music. You never can tell.

Another trial of actors, especially of the great ones, must be the too frequent experience of being admired for the wrong things and applauded in the wrong place. This is the drawback of prestige. People are attracted by what they hear on all sides is something very fine; they go, then, prepared to applaud, and they do; but what they cheer is celebrity, which any fool can understand, not artistic excellence, which only taste can recognize. Indeed, taste is not enough, a certain experience is also needed. Take Proust's account of his hero's first time of seeing the great actress Berma (Sarah Bernhardt), and the boy's frank bewilderment. I quote from Mr. Scott-Moncrieff's translation, "Within a Budding Grove":

In vain might I strain towards Berma eyes, ears, mind, so as not to let one morsel escape me of the reasons which she would furnish for my admiring her, I did not succeed in gathering a single one. I could not even, as I could with her companions, distinguish in her diction and in her playing intelligent intonations, beautiful gestures. I listened to her as though I were reading *Phèdre*, or as though *Phædra* herself had at that moment uttered the words

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I was hearing, without its appearing that Berma's talent had added anything at all to them. . . . Then, at last, a sense of admiration did possess me, provoked by the frenzied applause of the audience. I mingled my own with theirs, endeavouring to prolong the general sound so that Berma, in her gratitude, should surpass herself, and to be certain of having heard her on one of her great days. . . . One discovers the touch of genius in Berma's acting a week after one has heard her, in the criticism of some review, or else on the spot, from the thundering acclamation of the stalls. But this immediate recognition by the crowd was mingled with a hundred others, all quite erroneous ; the applause came, most often, at wrong moments, apart from the fact that it was mechanically produced by the effect of the applause that had gone before, just as in a storm, once the sea is sufficiently disturbed, it will continue to swell, even after the wind has begun to subside. . . .

If we were quite sincere, isn't that how we should have to describe our medley of impressions on first coming into touch with art really great ?

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No doubt we are all the better for being chastened. No doubt it is just as well that we should have some persistent monitor at hand, to tell us what fools we are, and what a silly world it is, and, in particular, what pernicious rascals those doctors are with their pig-headed belief in the virtues of vaccination. Such a monitor is seldom lacking, because the scolding temperament and otherwise-mindedness are, after all, human and entitled to their place in the sun, and, when backed by powerful intellect, may even be sure of a front place. A century ago he was called William Cobbett ; then he changed his name to Thomas Carlyle, and, alternatively, John Ruskin ; in our time he has become George Bernard Shaw. I conjecture that Mr. Shaw will go down in history as the most potent of the lot, because the most ostensibly reasonable, because he is careful never to put forward his prejudices as mere personal likes and dislikes but as conclusions to which we must all be driven by what it is the mode to call remorseless logic. It is a remarkably effective *camouflage*. If you are always going to be *contra mundum* it is as well to be coeksure. There is never the slightest token in Mr. Shaw of misgiving, of intellectual

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doubt, of that humility which is forced on most students by the clearer perception of the inevitable limitation to their own knowledge of the cosmos. In his new preface to *Saint Joan* he pronounces the famous Dogma of Papal Infallibility to be the most modest pretension of the kind in existence, and pictures the Pope "on his knees in the dust confessing his ignorance before the throne of God." In his own case Mr. Shaw utters the Dogma without the confession. He speaks of Joan's "overweening presumption, the superbity as they called it." Here, at any rate, he is at one with his heroine. Superbity is his foible.

But Joan was the more humble-minded of the two. She was "superb," cocksure, full of "cheek," but always vicariously, always as the mouthpiece of the saints, her "voices," as she called them. Mr. Shaw has no use for St. Catherine, St. Margaret and St. Michael; St. Bernard suffices him. And Joan did for one moment lose confidence, when she recanted during her trial. I don't believe Mr. Shaw ever recanted any opinion in his life. It is true that he classifies some of his earlier novels as works of his "nonage." It is something to have him concede that he ever had a nonage. The parallel might be prolonged. It was Joan's superbity (for military capacity she obviously had, and could have, none) that enabled her to raise the siege of Orleans, where the English besiegers were few and ill-supplied and as liable to superstitious "funk" as Joan to super-

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stitious confidence ; it was also her superbity that led her, as Mr. Shaw says, to the stake. Mr. Shaw's has proved a formidable influence over the superstitious part of our own "intellectuals," the people who like their minds to be made up for them by some one whom they can apotheosize—and the present apotheosis of Mr. Shaw is one of the wonders of the age—but it must have been fatal to his influence with those who are only to be persuaded by modesty and mansuetude.

Mr. Shaw seems to like masculine women. He says Joan "was the sort of woman that wants to lead a man's life." Also "she was the pioneer of rational dressing for women"—which would appear to be trousers or Plus Fours. But for Joan's masculinity, intact virginity, and utter lack of the sexual appeal there is another reason, which he does not mention. There are, I believe, strong grounds for thinking that she never, physically, became a woman at all. Anatole France mentions the point but, for obvious reasons, does not expatiate upon it. As to Anatole France's "*Vie de Jeanne d'Arc*," Mr. Shaw, I submit, dismisses it all too cavalierly in saying he

wrote a *Life of Joan* in which he attributed Joan's ideas to clerical prompting and her military success to an adroit use of her by Dunois as a *mascotte* : in short, he denied that she had any serious military or political ability.

What France says, examining the text of Joan's Letter to the English, etc., is that it suggests in its phraseology the possibility of clerical inspiration.

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As to her use as a mascot, what more likely ? Which is the more probable, that an illiterate peasant girl, who didn't even know the topography of the town she was to relieve, who thought herself on the right bank of the Loire when she had been brought in fact to the left, should suddenly reveal an exact knowledge of the position and military skill to take advantage of it, or that the military leaders, who already had the knowledge, should use Joan in the best way they could use her, as a heartener and centre of enthusiasm for the forces they themselves manœuvred ? When she was taken at Compiègne, it was through her own fault. She still heard her "voices," thought herself invincible, and refused to retreat when commanded. Her military ability can hardly have been "serious."

What makes Mr. Shaw's treatment of M. France peculiarly ungracious is that the ablest scene in his play, the debate between bishop, chaplain, and nobleman, which brings out so clearly the larger historical issues of the subject, is obviously suggested by the presentation of these issues in M. France's book. There is nothing to complain of in that. Mr. Shaw was well within his right, and can but compel our admiration for the skill with which he has converted historical arguments into dramatic form. But is it not rather unkind to dismiss so summarily an authority which you have yourself condescended to consult ?

Of course, Mr. Shaw cannot refrain from his usual

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gibe at the critics. They are hypocrites. What they really think, but never say, is:—"I hate classical tragedy and comedy as I hate sermons and symphonies; but I like police news and divorce news and any kind of dancing or decoration that has an aphrodisiac effect on me or on my wife or husband. And whatever superior people may pretend, I cannot associate pleasure with any sort of intellectual activity; and I don't believe any one else can, either." Well, well. Superbity must have its fling.

“ MATERIA CRITICA ”

I DON'T suppose any Englishman deplores the successful revolt of the American Colonies. If they had remained colonies they must have become, politically, a nuisance. The tail would have wagged the dog. How dull it would be if “ America ” were only another building at Wembley, alongside Canada, and the Gold Coast Colony, and the Amusement Park ! How infinitely more entertaining the actual spectacle, the home of superlatives, the original inventor of the cocktail and mint julep and the canvas-back duck and a new form of humour and a new English tongue. It is a part of elegance for an Englishman to quote American slang, as Cicero, in his letters to Atticus, quoted Greek. I suspect our adopted Americanisms are apt to be a little behind the times and that our “ du tell ” and “ Gee wizz ” must sound strangely old-fashioned to our American friends. The truth is, they have a literary value with us, and a literary origin, having been culled from the novels of W. D. Howells and the earlier Mark Twain.

To replenish, and refurbish, our stock we are dependent on imported American plays and, more especially, on those American “ detective ” stories

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where young reporters move down "blocks" or into "joints," police "captains" talk with an Irish brogue, and the "district attorney" is invariably a fool. Personally, I rely upon the works of Mr. George Jean Nathan, who writes about the theatre in the *American Mercury* and from time to time reprints his remarks. Here is a new volume, "Materia Critica" which is rich in local expressions and local allusions, some of them deliciously intriguing to an English reader. Example: "And does the good actress enjoy it, this bosh? I ask you, did Booker T. Washington enjoy watermelon?" Well, *did* he? I have to give it up. But I assume from the context that he did, as we are evidently expected to suppose that the good actress does enjoy this bosh.

This is an instance of what I mean by the advantage to an Englishman of American Independence—a vast society developing ways, manners, modes of speech that are not his, though there is enough resemblance to stimulate curiosity and to reward conjecture. And here is something, a survival from the American past, that is like, yet unlike, survivals of our own:—

The Burlesque Show. Let us take a look in at the old Olympic Theatre down in Fourteenth Street. Unlike the affectedly tony Columbia Theatre uptown, the Olympic remains true to first principles and devotes itself not, as in the case of the Columbia, to fifth-rate imitations of third-rate Broadway music shows, but to pure, unadulterated and heart-warming old knock 'em down and drag 'em out burlesque. Here is rosemary of the palmy

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days. Not a bustle is safe from the slap-slat, not a face is spared from the seltzer-siphon, not a wriggle is omitted from the cooch dance, not a bass drum remains whole when the final curtain comes down. Here still is the good old “ Casino at Monte Carlo ” with the Rocky Mountains appropriately figuring on the back-drop and with Izzy, Pat, and Bozo talking successively into the telephone and receiving, respectively, a spray of flour, a squirt of water, and—ah, Bozo, thou lucky rogue!—a glass of foaming lager. Here still is the good old “ Beach at Ostend,” with O. U. Kidd and I. M. Woozy coming suddenly, to their horror, upon their wives and fooling the latter by donning aprons and passing themselves off on the ladies as waiters. And here still is the good old “ Artist’s Studio ” with the eight ex-chambermaids arrayed in lobster-coloured fleshings, their right arms curved with pains-taking grace over their heads and representing—in the elegance of the programme—“ The Birth of the Le Printemps.”

This delightful little sketch—rather, if I may be pardoned for saying so, in the vein of that very Elia whose influence on modern English essayists Mr. Nathan deplores—soon diverges into the accustomed plenitude of local reference. “ It ” (the old downtown burlesque), he says, “ is rapidly being driven from the stage and into the disrepute by a Puritan censorship, a wave of dull Art, and a reduction in the *personnel* of the United States Navy.”

While it is yet here let us enjoy it, and enjoying it meditate upon the purple times when Harrison and Grover Cleveland yet held the White House, when the hanging out of the picture of a goat in front of the boulevard inns signalized the great annual dawn of reason, when our coins and currency still bore the faces of noble Indians instead of ignoble politicians, when shoes were polished by grinning, singing black native sons instead of by muttering alien followers of D’Annunzio, when it required an alpenstock to climb into a barber’s chair, when no one would eat

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a sausage because Leutgert had murdered his wife, when John Philip Sousa's hair was still black, when the smallest church in every town was that of the Methodists—when we were still Americans.

A few footnotes (*e.g.*, goats and reason, sausages and Leutgert) would here be welcome to the English reader.

Mr. Nathan, I observe, devotes several pages to the consideration of criticism, what it is, and, more especially, what it is *not*. This is natural in a young and comparatively unsophisticated, and on the whole (I conjecture) rather Philistine society. Even in our older European world, with its far longer experience of art, the critic is perpetually being challenged to justify his existence. It is not only the Philistines who misunderstand him, but the various persons he criticizes as well, managers, playwrights, and players—all approaching the subject from their own angle, which is not his. Mr. Nathan professes himself an impenitent hedonist. Does this work give me pleasure? If so why, if not why not? Yes, but the value of his answer will depend on his taste. If he have not taste, which is as much a matter of cultivation as of natural aptitude, he is no critic. It is said (though not so often as it used to be) that his chief task is judgment; but his judgment will be informed, or informed, by his taste. Unfortunately, the popular, or uncultivated, taste settles the fate of plays; accordingly, it is what managers, and most playwrights and players, cater and write

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and act for. It affects the critic, too, in the long run ; it is rather lonely work being *vox clamantis in deserto*, and you learn to allow for the taste of the general audience, and at least record its judgment alongside your own. Mr. Nathan, I fancy, has a weakness for the *contra mundum* attitude. It makes him at any rate very lively reading. To praise him without reserve would embarrass me ; he himself and the readers of a certain article in the *Mercury* will understand why. “ The reciprocal civility of authors,” said Johnson, “ is one of the most risible scenes in the farce of life.”

THE NATIONAL GALLERY AS EXPERIENCE

WHO was it who said that, whenever a new book came out, he went and read an old one? It sounds like Lamb or Hazlitt and, I believe, is generally attributed to one or other of the pair, but I have never succeeded in tracing it. Whenever, with each recurrent May, the "Academy" reopens, I resolve to visit it, so as to be abreast of the times, to have a presentable opinion about "the picture of the year," and to deplore with actual instances the present condition of British art, but it always ends in my going to the National Gallery instead.

The truth is, brand-new pictures intimidate me. They are aggressive and garish, like the "new rich"; uncomfortable, like new boots; indigestible, like new vintage port; disconcerting, like the new Regent Street. They challenge a precipitate judgment. It seems absurd to regard things with the paint hardly dry on them *sub specie æternitatis*. "Sir, it is driving on the system of life," and so, I suppose, they must continue to be painted. But I cannot abide them. "The old masters were very fine," said Mr. Ramsay MacDonald the other day, "but we could not live on the old masters alone." Well, the old masters suffice me. They do not

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impertinently compete with nature, they have become part of it. Mousehold Heath may be elsewhere on the map, but for me it is situate on the N. side of Trafalgar Square. Endymion Porter may have a history of his own, but for me he is just two portraits, remarkably dissimilar, and an unforgettable name of romance. The Wertheimer family of Mr. Sargent have become as "legendary," belong as much to the world of imagination as Hogarth's "Family Group," who it seems were in real life named Strode and had a butler named Jonathan Powell—but have now all changed their names to Hogarth. When the earliest of Mr. Sargent's Wertheimers appeared it created, I believe, what people call a "sensation." It was a new picture and the vulgar had their opportunity of gloating over novelty. Now it is an old master, and we can placidly enjoy it, as we placidly enjoy Holbein's Duchess of Milan or Constable's Malvern Hall. I mention these two last, because they are things, unlike the Wertheimer, of pure beauty. "The Sicilian expedition," wrote Gray to his friend West, who was reading Thucydides, "is it or is it not the very finest thing you ever read in your life?" So I would ask of Constable's Malvern Hall, is it or is it not the very finest bit of English Landscape you ever saw in your life?

I shall very likely be called a Philistine for my pains—be told that I like English park scenery and enjoy the Constable because it depicts that: in other words, that I appreciate not the art but the subject,

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which is an æsthetic heresy, etc., etc. I do not plead guilty. The colouring of the picture, the dark blue-greens of the trees against the pale red of the Georgian house ; the elegant symmetry of the design, with the reflection of the house in the lake ; above all, what I must inadequately call the feeling of the whole composition—all these things affect me. That the subject is a beautiful one in itself “spoils nothing,” as the French say. But what a wonderful corner that is where this gem modestly glows ! The “Flatford Mill” is close by it, and the “Frosty Morning” on the next wall. These are pictures that make one glad to be an Englishman, with an affectionate heart for the English countryside. It is a perpetual miracle to me that one can mount a few steps out of Trafalgar Square into a quiet room there, and, all of a sudden, enjoy these things, be transported and transformed by them, be changed by them into a different being. We become, for the time, Constables and Turners ourselves, see with their eyes, feel with their emotions.

But it is not always possible to put ourselves in the painter's place—however indispensable that process may be, as the æsthetic theorists assure us, to the complete enjoyment of his work. You may learn everything about the man, about his times, about his points of view, but can you live again in his mood, can you, for instance, recapture the naïve religious emotion that produced all those “squint-eyed saints” ? Even supposing *per impossibile* you have

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done that, you will never be in his place, for between you will yawn the gulf of all that the world has known and felt between his time and yours. That will have entered into your soul, and you cannot unlearn it. Croce's principle, then, must always be a counsel of perfection. Our impressions of the Old Masters will always have to remain what he calls them, *palimpsests*, visions of our own superimposed on the visions of the artist. Is it not the most glorious thing about a picture-gallery that it should be a perpetual repertory of these palimpsests, each picture stirring in every different beholder a new emotion, a different dream?

And that is how I like to think of the National Gallery, as a huge kaleidoscope always falling into new patterns or as a beneficent fairy always endowing its visitors with new experiences. These visitors, I think, for the most part are indifferent to the "documentary" aspect of the exhibition. They do not keenly distinguish between Sandro Filipepi and Amico di Sandro. They leave the experts to quarrel about that, and call each other names,

. . . wich is plenty, Dudley James.

Indeed all technical questions shrink into insignificance by comparison with the immense addition which such a show as this makes to the sum of human enjoyment. The sheer Philistine even, who cares nothing about pictures as such, will find his account there, if only in the accumulation of facts

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about the world he lives in and its past history. Gainsborough and Goya may have nothing æsthetic to say to him, but they will at least give him an interesting contrast of professional character in Dr. Ralph Schomberg and Dr. Peral. He will become aware of the manners (or lack of them) of Flemish boors and of the grave faces of Italian madonnas ; he will see the elegant stateliness of English countesses in the eighteenth century and the microscopic charm of woven patterns and the curious shapes of wineglasses and musical instruments in the Dutch seventeenth. Or he may revisit the Venice of Casanova and see ladies in cocked hats and masks staring at a hippopotamus. The National Gallery, in short, is for all tastes, all cultures, and all ignorances : an inexhaustible fount of rich experiences.

A DIARIST

EVERY one seems to be reading "The Diary of a Country Parson," and the Rev. James Woodforde is better and more widely known to-day than he ever was in his lifetime, a century and a half ago. Better known? Yes, because a man reveals some sides of himself in his diary more fully than he is ever likely to in social intercourse. It is certain that we know some sides of Pepys (Pepys the amorist, for instance) more intimately than his contemporaries did. That is why we all like reading diaries; we do it out of sheer curiosity about other people's lives, an impertinent, nay, a prurient, curiosity, if you will, but one remarkably prevalent among the human race. Another reason is that diaries are a record of *unselected* life, and, therefore, much nearer the genuine article than fiction or history, both of which give you life deliberately sifted, sorted out, and arranged in a pattern—and a pattern of somebody else's devising. These are works, history no less than fiction, in which the author's imagination intervenes between you and the facts upon which he draws; you want to rend the veil and to penetrate behind the scenes. And so you welcome the Rev. James Woodforde with eagerness as an authentic

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faet. He may not be so interesting a charaeter as the Rev. Mr. Primrose, or Parson Adams, but he has the advantage over them of being real:—

After breakfast we took a walk about Yarmouth, called at Boulters shop in the Market Place and there I bought a fine doll for Jenny's little Maid. pd for it 0.5.0. For a dram bottle covered with leather pd 0.2.0. For a silk purse pd 0.3.0. . . . At one o'clock the Cannons on the Fort were all fired. I fired the first Cannon on it of six Pounders and the second—and I likewise fired two of the largest Cannons 24 Pounders. They made a prodigious report.

Here you are face to face with something that actually happened at Yarmouth on June 4th, 1778. You can see the extravagant parson (for Jenny's little maid's doll cost the equivalent of 25s. to-day) bustling into Boulter's shop. ("Boulter is a very evil Man and a Quaker.") You can see his child-like delight at being allowed to let off so many big guns and at their prodigious report. It was the King's Birthday, and "Yarmouth was quite alive, Bells ringing. The Flags from the Ships in the sea and on the Quay all flying." Let us hope the sun was shining. "We were all pretty much fatigued before we got to bed, which was not till 1 in the morning. We had a couple of Fowls roasted for supper after we got home and we eat very hearty of them indeed. . . ."

But this was a great oeeasion, and the parson's everyday life was much more humdrum. He fished, and ate the pike he eaught. He took large toads

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out of his pond by the basketful and killed them with boiling water. He rated his serving men for being drunk and surly. He was distressed by finding his serving wenches "in trouble" (a frequent occurrence). He rode out with the squire and the squire's mistress (also a frequent occurrence). He saw his sister off by the coach: "My poor dear Sister shook like an aspin leaf going away, she never went in a stage Coach before in her Life." He was often depressed: "being rather low after" (his sister's departure); "I was quite low this evening." He was conscientious in the discharge of parish duties.

I buried poor Miss Rose this evening at Weston aged 20 years. It was a very pretty decent Funeral. But Js. Smith the Clerk made me wait in performing the office at the grave near a Qr. of an Hour, the grave not being long enough a good deal. It was a very great interruption. I gave it to Js. afterwards.

Also, like everybody else, apparently, he ate and drank more than could have been good for him.

Indeed, the Diary is mainly a record of hearty eating and drinking. This parson notes dishes with a cook's minuteness and bottles with a cellarman's. Here is a country meal for 15 people, to celebrate "Mr. Wilkes's enlargement."

We had for dinner a boiled Rump Beef 45 pd weight, a ham and half a dozen Fowls, a roasted Saddle of Mutton, two very rich puddings, and a good Sallet with a fine cucumber.

At Oxford you naturally look for more "polite eating," as Fielding calls it, and at New College, of

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which the Rev. J. W. was a Fellow, he got his chance, “as I order dinner every day being Sub-Warden.”

We had for dinner two fine Codd's boiled with fried souls round them and oyster sauce, a fine Sirloin of Beef roasted, some peas soup, and an orange pudding for the first course; for the second we had a lease of Wild-Ducks roasted, a fore Qu. : of Lamb, and sallad and mince Pies. . . . After the second course there was a fine plumb cake brought to the senr. Table, as is usual on this day, which also goes to the Batchelors after. . . . We had Rabbits for Supper roasted, as is usual on this day. . . . The Sub-Warden has one to himself; the Bursars each one apiece, the Senr. Fellows $\frac{1}{2}$ a one each. The Junr. Fellows a rabbit between three.

New College did itself pretty well, but they managed still better at the House :—

We had a very elegant Dinner. The first course was, part of a large Cod, a Chine of Mutton, some Soup, a Chicken Pye, Puddings and Roots, etc. Second course, Pidgeons and Asparagus, a Fillet of Veal with Mushrooms, and high Sauce with it, roasted Sweetbreads, hot Lobster, Apricot Tart, and in the middle a Pyramid of Syllabubs and Jellies. We had a Desert of Fruit after Dinner, and Madeira, white Port and red to drink as Wine. We were all very cheerful and merry.

At Brasenose they were more curious, and knew how to blend literature with the pleasures of the table :—

It being Shrove Tuesday we had Lambs Wool to drink, a composition of Ale, sugar, etc., Lobsters, Pancakes, etc., to eat at Supper, and the Butler there gives a Plumb Cake with a copy of Verses of his own making upon it. . . .

The Brasenose butler seems to have emulated the poetical pastrycook in *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

That a man should be able to remember all these dishes (especially after partaking of them) strikes

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you with wonder, until you reflect that this gift for minute notation is implied in the diary-writing temperament. For the art requires a special character, methodical, cherishing facts, no matter how trivial, for their own sake, taking the smaller details of life, in short, more seriously than do most people. In fact your Diarist is born, not made ; a kind of natural oddity. But it would be the height of ingratitude to depreciate the race. They are among the greatest benefactors of posterity. Without such records as this Country Parson's, we should never guess how plain men lived in the eighteenth century, how they " gave it to James " and bought a doll for Jenny's little maid.

SOUND OR SIGHT

THE two great popular amusements of to-day, "listening-in" and the "motion-pictures," have one thing in common : each forgoes the aid of a sense. You cannot see the performers in one case, you cannot hear them in the other. One appeals to the blind, the other to the deaf. Which of the two dropped senses is the easier to do without : sight or hearing ? Which of the two fragmentary worlds is the further removed from the real complete world : the invisible or the inaudible ?

It is a nice question. I consult my own experience and find that when I am listening-in my imagination always tends to complete the sounds I hear with a picture of the scene. I seem to see, as well as hear, the singer or the speaker. If they are performing a play or an opera that I know, memory comes in to help, and I see the action on the stage. If I do not know it, the mental visualization is, of course, more difficult, but a continuous action of some sort I find I must imagine. Now and then there is a solution of continuity ; after a song there will be an interval of silence followed by a burst of applause from the invisible audience—I know then there has been some bit of stage "business" which I have had to

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miss, and when these silent intervals are frequent there is a serious diminution of one's pleasure. For the effort to visualize the hidden scene is always in operation, and nothing is so wearisome as wasted effort. Even when there is no dramatic action, when, for instance, they are broadcasting a concerto or a symphony, I find that I mentally visualize an orchestra. I can see the bows of the first violins all swaying together, as well as hear the notes they sound. And when the audience break out into applause I see them, too, in my mind's eye. Of course the mental picture is only a vague, blurred thing; to be alone and seeing a crowd in your imagination is a very different thing from being in the thick of a real crowd. But my point is that the visual imagination is always there to supplement the auditory sensation. You do not listen to hidden performers without forming some sort of image of them in your mind.

On the other hand, at a motion-picture I do not find that any imaginary sounds come to me to supplement the visual impression. The figures are in conversation; they move their lips, but what words their lips are forming I can only deduce from their actions. It is a logical process I go through; from their behaviour I judge that certain words must have passed between them. What matters is their behaviour, not their speech. A continuous dramatic action may be quite easily represented by behaviour alone. Did not Diderot contend that the quint-

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essence of all drama was *pantomime*, and stop his ears with cotton wool at the play in order that he might judge the better of its quality? Of course if the "movies" try to give you the effect of speech unassisted by behaviour, if, *e.g.*, one of the characters pauses to elucidate the fifth proposition of the first book of Euclid, or to explain Einstein's theory of relativity, you get at once a *reductio ad absurdum*. The classic instance is Lord Burleigh's nod. These are the things the film cannot possibly do, and that wireless telephony can do with perfect ease. It is only, then, by restricting itself to effects interpretable by the language of visible behaviour that the film justifies its existence. It did not understand the need for this restriction at first, and tried to supplement behaviour by the clumsy device of "captions" or written speech. Fortunately, the permissible range is wide. It covers the spectacular elements of life—great assemblies, processions, the *va-et-vient* of multitudes, the convulsions of nature. Notably it favours romance. For remark that the language of behaviour is an emphatic language, it lends itself best to the expression of the violent and the lurid in human life—which is exactly what the majority of men and women, ground down in monotonous toil, desire to have expressed for them. I saw a romantic film at the Tivoli the other day, *Warning Shadows*, said to be of Teutonic origin (and, indeed, obviously so if only from the straight backs of the flunkys' heads), a tale of jealousy and murder, which realized

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this ideal to the full. There was not a single "caption" in it; all was told on the screen itself, and told with thrilling effect. Indeed, I think the dead silence of the film was here no drawback, but an enhancement of the horror. It looks as though the motion-pictures were going to give romantic melodrama a new lease of life. "High" comedy, the comedy of brilliant dialogue and verbal wit, is, of course, outside their range. That must still be left to the regular stage, to the revivals of Mr. Playfair and the audacities of Mr. Maugham.

When all is said, however, I think the fascination of "wireless" is the greater. There is a touch of magic about it. You clap on a kind of metal head-dress and lo! there come to you voices from the void, or, rather, from the uttermost parts of the earth. At one moment you are in a Birmingham concert room, listening to the Hallé orchestra playing a symphony of Lalo's, at another you are with the crowd at the Savoy, dancing to the saxophones of the Havana band, and chattering "like mad" between the dances, and then, hey presto! after a little buzzing and whistling, you hear a voice, with nasal accents and rough "r's," announcing a programme from "KDKA." It is Pittsburgh, U.S.A., that you are listening to, and you form a mental picture of the Pittsburgh crowd that is listening with you, and perhaps wonder how Pittsburgh can put up with such commonplace music. Commonplace or not, there is something miraculous in your being able to hear it.

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And think of the tremendous "lift" which this wireless telephony has given to music all the world over! Music of every kind, from Beethoven's "Choral" symphony to "What'll I do?" brought home to you as you sit alone in your easy chair! It isn't, I dare say, quite the same music as you would hear were you in the concert room; the "values" of certain instruments in the orchestra are to some extent affected, I do not doubt, by the new mode of sound transmission. But remember, the whole thing is in its infancy, hardly beyond the experimental stage. . . . I take up my headpiece, and I hear a voice, "Here is the second general news bulletin. Mr. Austen Chamberlain reached Paris this evening, etc., etc. Captain Arthur, the A.D.C. of the Bank case, underwent a further examination this afternoon, etc., etc." Oh, bother!

LONDON SURPRISES

PAUL MORAND has said that London is a city that spoils you for any other. He ought to know, this alert young Frenchman, for he has travelled through it from end to end, as few Londoners do. Most of us residents are apt to take our London for granted. We know the road from home to the office and the club, we know Bond Street and Piccadilly and Ludgate Hill and St. Paul's and the Bank, and the rest we leave contentedly on the map, to be explored some day when we have time and are in the vein. I speak as a stay-at-home. There are adventurous spirits, I know, who have perlustrated all London and for whom those astonishing catalogues of place-names on the front of the omnibuses mean something. For my part, I think they are mistaken. I think it is better to keep up, so far as one may, the sense of mystery as regards the place we live in. There are names on the 'buses—"Haggerston," for instance, and "Seven Kings"—which give me the romantic thrill of the unknown, and as I wish to keep this unimpaired, I do not design to visit the places named. If I did, I should know the truth; and few of us can bear that.

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Of course if you are writing a guide book it is a different matter. There are certain advantages in seeing the places you describe. And yet fictitious topography has its charm, especially when judiciously blended with the real thing. Miss Austen mentions Richmond and Box Hill, but you will search the map in vain for Highbury. Precisely where in Northamptonshire is Mansfield Park? How many miles beyond Bromley and in which quarter of the compass are Hunsford Rectory and Rosings? That is where we stay-at-homes have the best of it. London is for us the place where the real and the unreal co-exist, for any part of it which is a mere name on the map for you might just as well be fictitious. The imagination can roam free in it; all sorts of romantic novels may happen in it, whereas novels about the places you actually know must be scrupulously realistic.

And when the stay-at-home does walk abroad, what delicious surprises are in store for him! He has read in his "Tancred" about the place where the French cooks live; he follows the given clues and discovers Shepherd's Market, though the French cooks seem to have departed. Shepherd's Market, in the heart of old Mayfair, is one of the oddest incongruities in London. It is a little self-conscious nowadays, perhaps, and has the air of a slum nicely tidied up for inspection, a "show" place; just as there are certain old hostelrys in London which pride themselves (and charge extra) on account of

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their sanded floors and two-pronged forks. Hard by Shepherd's Market there is a pub with the delightful sign of "The Running Footman." I mention this, not out of consideration for the thirsty, but to show the rare Queen Anne traditions of the spot.

Or you go down Berkeley Street and decide, for the first time in many years, so languid has hitherto been your curiosity, to penetrate the sunken passage on the confines of Lansdowne House, which you vaguely remember described in one of Trollope's novels. Here again is a surprise—for the habitual stay-at-home, not, of course, for the people who go down that passage every day. You find it leads, sooner or later, to Curzon Street, where you emerge again into the real world ; but what a queer, uncanny place the passage itself is ! The walls of Chester or the spires of Chartres are not more romantic. It is one of the mysteries of London. Johnson says of Pope's Grotto at Twickenham (I quote from memory, and won't swear to every word), "Where necessity enforced a passage, imagination created a grotto." I don't know whether necessity enforced this passage between Berkeley Street and Curzon Street, but your imagination can create anything out of it you please. That is, if you are a true stay-at-home, who have put off exploring the passage until what some people (not psychologists) are fond of calling the psychological moment.

Perhaps the greatest surprise of all for the stay-at-home is the magic transformation which has come

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over some district of London all "unbeknown" to him, while all these years he has never had, or sought, occasion to visit it. There is Chelsea. The name "Chelsea," until a few days ago, suggested to me the dusty, dismal ruins of what were once Cremorne Gardens, a side street or two out of Mr. Arnold Bennett's novels, and a wilderness of small, rather smug houses. The wand of the late Mr. Willett (I am told) touched it, and converted it into a region of palatial "Mansions." It must be the paradise of house-agents. I suppose if one went further afield, one would find similar changes all over London. Kensington and Campden Hill, where the houses as a rule were small and snug (as distinguished from smug), have, notably, undergone the transformation of Chelsea. The demolition of Nash's Regent Street one had seen, of course, with one's own eyes; but one never suspected the new London that had arisen further west and south-west, while one was living, in blissful unconceiousness, elsewhere. When asked for his address the Mulligan grandly replied, "I live over there," sweeping his arm over the prospect of what was then generically known as the "West End." I should like to see the Mulligan's face if he could be brought back to-day to his "over there."

Nos et mutamur. The tag is, for once, reassuring. If one went back to the old London that one knew, it would be with a changed heart and, I daresay, a sense of discomfort. Nevertheless, I like to think

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that there are still nooks and corners where the drab, dowdy, but cosy little houses of one's youth still survive. Or are they mere dream-fancies, a part of that fictitious topography with which the novels of Miss Austen enchant us ?

A TITHE BARN

It is within a stone's throw of the forecourt to the big house and oddly wedged between the church and the rose garden. Oddly, for these are incongruous neighbours. Six centuries old though the church is, the barn is obviously some centuries older still, "older than any history that is written in any book," while the rose garden with its sentimental sundial suggests only the Wardour Street antiquity of a Marcus Stone. You pass within and instinctively remove your hat, for you seem to have entered a consecrated place. But where you look for an altar there is only a draped Union Jack—which you mentally associate with the brand-new war memorial at the cross roads hard by—and the sole congregation is of a sort to which none but a St. Francis would venture to preach, a numerous colony of birds, to wit, who maintain a continuous twitter in the dim recesses of the lofty roof. The subdued notes of the birds, however, the church clock striking the afternoon hour, and the faint sounds of occasional cheering from a distant cricket field, serve only to mark the meditative and august peace of the place. You stand absorbed and, like George Sand in her old age—it was one of Henry James's favourite words

A TITHE BARN

about her—appeased. You feel you could write another Gray's *Elegy* if you only "had the mind." Business and bustle become words full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. They may have a meaning in London, but not here in the Cotswolds. *Is* there a London? *Is* there a Mr. Baldwin and a M. Poincaré? This barn must have seen innumerable international complications in its time, or rather, must have stood aloof, indifferent, while they happened out of sight. For here they seem irrelevant, absurd, queer phantasmagoric things of some other world. So, notably, do theatres—until the thought strikes one that theatrical performances are traditionally associated with barns. Edmund Kean and other famous "barn-stormers" are evidence of that. Stendhal said the best acting he ever saw was by some strolling players in a barn. But I dare swear this tithe barn in the Cotswolds was never desecrated by any barn-stormer.

I turn a corner, and lo! my dream is dispelled. Behind a screen is a piano, and affixed to the wall a scrap of paper, headed "*Programme*." The item on this that catches my eye is:—

No. 7. Fox-trot.

Oh, profanation! oh, sacrilege! To have the mind thus suddenly switched from the rapture of meditation, the eternal verities, the Sisters Three and other branches of learning to the giddy Corybants of Rector's and Le Perroquet! From the birds who might have been a fit congregation for St. Francis

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to visions of mountebank niggers grimacing over saxophones !

Obviously the simple fact is, the barn had been used for a dance by the villagers. It offers an immense area of smooth floor, which seems nowadays inevitably to tempt all and sundry, villagers as well as burgesses, to jazzing. But jazzing in the Cotswolds ! And, worse, jazzing in a venerable edifice that must have been standing when they fought at Hastings, and still looks more like a cathedral than a barn ! The big house is mainly Tudor ; it has an Inigo Jones gate-house ; but the barn was there ages before that, when the estate was the hunting-lodge of the Lord Abbot of Lukesbury. Have these jazzing villagers no historical sense, no respect for the *genius loci* ? I think of the Stranger in the old burlesque of Kotzebue's play and his saturnine comment on the villagers' ball :—

Happy villagers, dance away !

Fits may follow, but dance away !

and I could almost hope that fits did follow that No. 7 Fox-trot.

Imagine the jazzing villagers of to-day brought face to face with the Lord Abbot and his monkish retainers of long ago. They would have much to share. A common humanity and, more particularly, a common Cotswold humanity ; a nearly common language (for the old English still survives in the Cotswold dialect) ; common appetites, passions, affections. And yet, thanks to the whirligig of time,

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there would be such differences—quite apart from jazzing—between them that they would stare at each other with a wild surprise. I conjecture they would be positively frightened of one another. Our consciousness of these differences we call the historical sense, and are accustomed to plume ourselves on it as a new acquisition of the human mind. But I fancy that we apply it far too roughly, that we are aware of the differences between our forefathers and ourselves only over long distances of time and, even so, mark only the larger differences. We need a vernier scale to subdivide the sub-divisions, and that is an instrument of an accuracy too nice for the average sensual man. But though unable to measure the differences, inclined perhaps to contest their existence, the average man in the presence of a man of the past would surely *feel* them. It is my conviction that if all the generations from the Lord Abbot's to the present were brought together in the barn, they would have a disquieting sense of something uneasy, a feeling that, far from being members one of another, they were all perfect strangers, with some mysterious *je ne sais quoi* in the mind of each which parted him for ever from the others. That mysterious element of difference would be the contribution of the Time Spirit.

I have been moved to this speculation by the family portraits in the big house—mainly eighteenth century. Bating variations of fashion in dress, they are all alike, (1) naturally, because they all belong to

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the same family, and (2) because they have been painted by mediocre artists, not artist enough to get beyond the type to individual *nuances*. They are all alike also in being unlike (in feature, I am not thinking of their wigs) any people of to-day. Their lips are pursed or smiling over other secrets than ours, their eyes have the memory of other visions. I declare I am afraid of them. I wouldn't meet them at dinner for the world. Not that they would bore me with their gossip about Bolingbroke and their reminiscences of Dettingen—what wouldn't one give to get these things at first hand?—but, sooner or later, we should be brought up short by something—a topic, an idea, a sentiment—that, at my date, would be second nature to me and that, at theirs, they couldn't even begin to conceive, or else one that still spoke a living language to them but to me had become an undecipherable hieroglyphic. And then there would be serious trouble. Talk of jazzing in tithe barns!

BOURG-SUR-MER

LUCIEN (aged ten) is the surprise-packet of our hotel. A short week ago he was a wide-cyed, frightened child, unkempt and unwashed; to a hasty foreign observer, all agog for characteristic French types, he might have passed for the village idiot. One morning, hey presto! he was magically transformed. A sky-blue tunic, like that of the *chasseurs-à-cheval* but without the astrakhan, and further differentiated by a vertical row of seven big brass buttons, hung loosely (to allow, no doubt, for future development) upon his exiguous frame. A casquette of the same colour, several sizes too large for him, wobbled on his tiny head. He had to hold it on when he ran, and from the moment of his miraculous transformation he was always running. You see, he had become the hotel page, and by running—without any apparent objective, but with a concentrated air of efficiency—he sought to demonstrate that his office was not the superfluity a vain people supposeth. The truth is, few of us at our modest hotel had felt the need of a page. Such luxuries might be “all merry capital” at the palatial establishment on the beach, with full view of the sea from every bedroom, fifty suites with private baths,

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and an American bar on the ground floor. But we could carry our own letters from the writing room to the post-box, and open the door of our hired motor-car for ourselves (or else get the chauffeur to do it for us). Why, then, the page? He seemed to be what a famous footnote to Gibbon calls a redundant ornament, that something stuck on without real use for which John Ruskin and William Morris were wont to invite the scorn of the Victorians. But he was, undeniably, *chic*. A modest hotel, however modest, might nevertheless, the management held, be *chic*.

And the most marvellous thing in Lucien's transformation was his alacrity to play this decorative part. From a rustic lout he had turned into a nimble imp of elegance, a silhouette from *La Vie Parisienne*, consciously and impertinently *chic*. He hastened to doff his cap (which, after all, it was easier to doff than to wear) and to signify with a knowing smile the corporate welcome of the hotel to new arrivals. He hovered authoritatively over their baggage without putting a finger to it. He was all alert attention at the door of their car without attempting (a thing for which neither his height nor his strength was adequate) to open it. For the rest, he pervaded and perused the "terrace" in front of the hotel, a flashing vision of sky-blue and brass buttons, the spirit of the moment, the "note" of the scene, its authentic "mark" like Whistler's butterfly or Napoleon's bee. Thus he illustrated for

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you the more liberal French use of the word "assist" in contributing to the general effect by his significant and satisfying presence.

Lucien is Young France. I have been searching, not without heartache, for specimens of Old France, with the most meagre results. I believe I know more of this countryside than the oldest inhabitant, and am listened to with polite but obvious incredulity when I relate how I first came to it by Diligence, long before the railway had cut into its pleasant valley and set up an ugly "Gare" in the heart of the town, which has ruined the curve of the little port and, I may add, is steadily demoralizing its literary taste. I suppose somewhere in Bourg-sur-Mer there must be such a thing as literary taste, but, if there be, it must satisfy itself by post. Neither at the railway bookstall nor at any bookshop in the town can you obtain anything that can be called literature. Tales of blood and mystery, the Nights of London (very lurid nights to judge from the illustration on the cover), Amorous Chronicles of Marie Antoinette (which suggests scandal about Queen Elizabeth)—that is the sort of stuff they offer you, interspersed with translations of stories by English authors whose very names are unknown to me (some caitiff English publisher must be doing a roaring trade in this "line") and work-baskets decorated with shells. They don't seem to have ever heard of Anatole France or Marcel Proust. It is, for that matter, a familiar fact that the French people don't

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read. Here, instead of reading, they sit all day in front of the Café de la Plage or the Restaurant de la République, drinking bocks, or else haunt the Casino, where dancing seems to have superseded gambling and the "Pietures" (Ameriean, as usual) can be enjoyed for the modest guerdon of 3f.

I suppose they must be called a vulgar crowd, but vulgarity, as we all know, loses half its grossness by being unfamiliar. At any rate, there is a kind of happy childishness about our crowd at Bourg-sur-Mer that goes far to redeem the passion of its men-folk for runeible hats and its general indifference to the humaner letters. Here, however, there is a striking contrast between present and past. In those old Diligence days I have spoken of Bourg-sur-Mer knew naught of the vulgar. It was a pet resort of royalist families—a peculiarity explained, perhaps, by its proximity to a famous château of the Orleans dynasty. The château still stands where it did, "kept up," as people say, in the midst of one of the most beautiful of French parks. But where are the royalists?

It is a melancholy business revisiting one's old haunts. The church is still there, riding like some tall galleon the sea of roofs in the town, and still showing the damage to its apse that was done, they say, by the English in Joan of Are's time, but the old, dirty, delightful hovels that surrounded it have now been swept away, and their smart, distressingly "up-to-date" successors have no friendly face for

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me. The pot-bellied old windmill, that dated from Cressy, has vanished, and it is no compensation to me to be offered the *agrément* of h. and c. in my bedroom and facilities for tennis and golf at the door. Saddest sight of all is the huge building jutting out from the very bluff of the cliff—a dismantled, derelict hotel. It is an empty shell, a monument of commercial enterprise “scrapped.” Over the inner door of the immense glazed saloon on the seaward side you can still see the now ironic word “Restaurant,” and magnificent chandeliers hang useless over an infinite deal of nothing. The roads that radiate from it in every direction are grass-grown. Behind it, what was evidently designed as a vast Indian garden is now an unkempt field where, striding through the long grass, you chance upon a fountain long since run dry or a plaster nymph dislodged from her pedestal, all forlorn. It will be a relief to turn from this gloomy scene to what Flaubert calls “la mélancolie des paquebots”—and, by the same token, there is every prospect of a bad crossing.

SIMPLE FRENCH COOKING

“THE divine took his seat at the breakfast table, and began to compose his spirits by the gentle sedative of a large cup of tea, the demulcent of a well-buttered muffin, and the tonic of a small lobster.” The divine, as readers of Peacock will know, was the Rev. Dr. Folliott, and the breakfast-table was that of his friend Mr. Crotchet. He belonged, the Rev. Doctor, to a race of country parsons that is now, I fear, extinct. He flourished before the Oxford movement and, indeed, before any movement in the Anglican Church, which is nowadays in perpetual motion. The prime mover of his day, Lord Brougham, he detested like the devil. Nevertheless, he was a good and worthy man in his way, and none the less good and worthy because he was an adept in what the author of “Tom Jones” calls “the art of polite eating.”

Another adept in that art was Jack Wilkes, as we know from the famous chapter in Boswell narrating the meeting of Wilkes and Johnson at the table of Messieurs Dilly in The Poultry, when Jack was very assiduous in helping Samuel to some fine veal. “A little of the brown—Some fat, Sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of

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giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest.” To read a passage like this gives you an almost gustatory pleasure and consoles the unfortunates who have been forbidden veal by their physicians. After all, these will say, it is better to eat it in imagination, especially in the company of Jack Wilkes and Samuel Johnson. Good reading about food (of which there is plenty in Peacock, and a little too much in the “Noctes Ambrosianæ”), good talk about food, these are the politest features of the art of polite eating.

And so I am wholly in accord with M. Marcel Boulestin, the author of “Simple French Cooking for English Homes,” when he tells us not to be afraid to talk about food. “Food which is worth eating,” he says, “is worth discussing. And there is the occult power of words which somehow will develop its qualities.” The occult power of words! There is a reverse side to that. Do we not all know the *menu* with its excellent and expansive French and its exiguous fare? Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, in one of his entertaining volumes of “Notes,” mentions a hostess, whose dinners always included as their central piece three cinders floating in grease, which she called *petites bouchées à la Lucullus*. But M. Boulestin is speaking of discussion, not misdescription. He has a word of true Christian charity for cooks. “A good cook is not necessarily a good woman with an even temper. Some allowance

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should be made for the artistic temperament.” Remember the artistic temperament if you find her (an accident that will sometimes happen in the best families) with her head in the fender, elapsing an empty bottle. It may be with an eye to such accidents that M. Boulestin advises us : “ Do not let your servants look after the wines. Do it yourself.”

About wines in general he has some valuable remarks. As that, after all, there is no reason why an English grocer should know anything about wine. Also that red wines in England are nearly always served too warm. Heat kills the flavour, and brings out the alcohol. “ That little sentence, ‘ have the chill taken off,’ has done more harm to good wine than it is possible to imagine.” But few of us, I imagine, needed to be warned against serving red wine with fish. Just now, in the present temperature, we are less interested in wines than in eup. On this subject the French are poor authorities. I remember taking a party of French friends to the Mitre at Oxford and regaling them with eider eup. (Oxford is the home of eider eup as the Maryland Club at Baltimore is, or rather was, the home of mint julep.) They had never seen or heard of it before ! But on their return to Paris its fame soon spread and I was asked when over there to give the recipe to some Parisians. My attempt was a hopeless failure. I didn’t know the French for “ borage.” I didn’t know the quantities. I didn’t know anything. Thus one passes through life blankly and shamefully

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ignorant of the most elementary matters. But now there reaches me from an enterprising Hereford firm a wonderful list of recipes for cider cup supplied by the most noted restaurants in London. I note that one restaurant is emphatic on "always orange, no lemon," whereas the others are all for lemon. Though it is dangerous for the outsider to offer an opinion, I believe the "always orange" people are right. Leave it to the Wilkites to say the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest.

But I must not digress into polite drinking. The main purpose of M. Boulestin's little book is to introduce you not to the cosmopolitan food of international hotels—"good of its kind, good enough in any case for people who dance between courses and want to be seen rather than eat well"—but to the *cuisine bourgeoise*, the simpler and better fare you may get, if you are lucky, at some wayside country inn in provincial France. Here you shall learn how to make sauce *bordelaise* and *béchamel* (nutmeg is one of the secrets of that) and *soubise*; that *sauce verte* for which one used to go to a restaurant in the Champs Elysées famous for it, and mentioned in one of Daudet's novels; and the excellent *sauce vinaigrette*, which turns calf's head into a dream. You will be told how to boil your turbot not in water but in a certain tasty decoction called a *court-bouillon*, and how *bœuf à la mode* is perfected by a liqueur glass of brandy and a glass of claret; how a roast leg of mutton (as many English housewives already

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know) is improved by two heads of garlic near the bone, how spaghetti can be artfully blended with *foie gras*, and how (fresh) truffles can be cooked in sherry or (if you have a wood fire) *au lard*. Some of the advice seems to be a counsel of perfection. Green salad is best made with oil of crushed walnuts ; but where is that oil to be got in London ? Nor may you use malt vinegar ; it must be red-wine vinegar, which Ronsard celebrated in verse three centuries ago. I wish M. Boulestin had included a recipe for *crêpes Suzette*. The best in Paris used to be those at Paillard's (underneath *The Times* Office), which, I read, is scheduled for demolition. To a friend who tells me they are very good at the St. James's Club, I reply : Almost thou persuadest me to become a diplomatist.

JAZZ

“EVEN that vulgar and tavern music,” says the author of the “*Religio Medici*,” “which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion and a profound contemplation of the first composer.” I thought of this famous passage at the Savoy the other evening as I sat at the birthday feast of the Savoy Orpheans, listening to the seductive, sensual drone of their saxophones and the weird quavering of their muted trumpets. Vulgar their music certainly was not—I take it to be the most *chic* thing of its kind in existence—whatever the justice of the Minister of Labour’s plea for its essentially “democratic” *raison d’être*, while the implication that the Savoy is a “tavern” (though, I believe, technically correct) seems almost impious. Nor do I mean that it struck in any of us a deep fit of devotion. But I do think that it brought home to us once more (which is all that Sir Thomas Browne probably intended to convey by his quasi-religious reference to the first composer) that mystic element of the unknowable in music which makes men regard it as a kind of magic—and which led Schopenhauer to find in it the very rhythm of life itself.

I speak of rhythm, but it is the peculiarity of this

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music that it has not one rhythm, but two. In a birthday greeting Chaliapin had written: "You, Savoy Orpheans, have achieved so perfect a combination of two rhythms as I believe has never been done before. . . . I have been captivated by the beauty." Over against a regular four-time rhythm (so regular, so insistent, that by itself it would convey to you nothing more than the loud ticking of a clock) is set a syneopated melody, slightly anticipating the beat, and, by that very anticipation, it is said, provoking a muscular reaction in the body, a corrective effort, as it were, that is the strongest incentive to the dance. In short, a syneopated melody slightly askew upon a fox-trot rhythm—that, as I understand it, is jazz.

The time has gone by to treat jazz with contempt. It is a new musical development, that is all. It has sometimes, as frequently happens with new developments in the arts, been its own enemy. I refer to the attempts to "jazz" existing musical pieces, to convert them into a rhythm other than that in which they were originally conceived. This fancy for "adaptation," "rearrangement," or the rehandling of existing material, has been the bane of all art. In the theatre you have novels turned into plays, you have tragedies provided with a "happy ending" (as in Garrick's version of *Lear*), you have Restoration comedies "stylized" and tricked out with a ballet, and you have all sorts of other "new readings" of old plays—all infringements of the funda-

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mental æsthetic principle that a work of art is its integral self, and nothing else, and that the only thing to do with it is to present it as its author conceived it. The principle holds, of course, in music. Only a short time ago my pleasure in the Schubertian beauty of *Lilac Time* was at one moment rudely spoiled by the conversion of one of Schubert's best-known airs in four-time into a waltz! If it had occurred to Schubert as a waltz he would have written it as a waltz; but, as a matter of fact, it did not so occur, and it was like somebody's impudence to tamper with it. I am afraid the Savoy Orpheans are not guiltless in this respect—unless the blame rests with Paul Whiteman's band, who seem to be originally responsible for an arrangement from Wagner, with a tune from *Tannhäuser* coolly altered from three time to four.

Nor is it only a matter of warped rhythm. The colour, as well as the shape of the thing, is changed when music written for the old orchestra is played by the new. Think of the vastly different values of the strings in the two, and of the preponderance of wood-wind and brass in the new over the old! Think of the difference between a melody played by the saxophone, with its peculiar penetrating tone that I have had to call sensual (for I really don't know what else to call it), and a melody played by the first violin! Obviously the jazz orchestra, developed for its own purposes, the purposes, that is to say, of the dance, is not an instrument fitted to

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play the music of the old symphony orchestra—music to be enjoyed for music's sake, though all the world suddenly went lame.

But, as Mr. Frank Tinney observes, " I am getting dee-ee-eep, Ernest "—so deep, my friends the music experts will tell me, as to be out of my depth. Let me, then, leave theorizing for chronicling, and say that the Orpheans gave us a kind of historical retrospect of jazz from its early stage of banjo and piano (" ragtime ")—more rhythm than melody—through the inevitable " reaction " and " renaissance " (all historical retrospects must discern, or invent, these), down to the latest phase, called, a little pretentiously, " symphonized syncopation." The name, however, matters little if the aim is to produce, as is claimed, sweetness and beauty of tone to the sacrifice of all harsh brass effects. By all means ! only it looks suspiciously as though the jazz orchestra were getting tired of playing music for dancers !

I venture to think they are still at their best in tunes meant to dance to. To hear them play " Love is just a gamble " is to enjoy languorously an opium-dream of De Quincey, without the headache ; and when they follow it with " Raggedy Ann " you feel once more the magic of music—one comes back to that—its miraculous power of changing your mood from the voluptuous and dreamy to the fantastically droll. " Tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad "—and which we are now bidden to call symphonized syncopation.

CRITICAL DISQUIETUDES

IN writing about Mr. Milne's new comedy *To Have the Honour*, I was conscious of a certain difficulty which not infrequently besets the critic because it is inherent in the very nature of criticism. Despite the etymology of his name, what distinguishes the critic is not so much his judicial faculty as his ability to communicate his impressions of the work criticized, to put his readers in a position to share his own state of mind about it. It is for this reason that he avoids such words as "good" and "bad," words which indicate a judgment to the reader, who, however, learns from them only that the critic is pleased with this or displeased with that, and nothing about the particular, individual quality of this or that. If a friend tells you that a certain stranger is a good or a bad man, the information may be correct enough, but will not enable you to identify him when you meet. If you are told that he looks like Mr. Pickwick, talks like Mr. Jingle, and has a strawberry mark on the left wrist, then you have something to go upon. There are milder critical epithets, such as "delightful," "agreeable," "pleasant," which are unavoidable—I plead guilty to their frequent use myself—but which are almost as useless to the reader. They

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tell him your *resultant* frame of mind, but nothing of the component processes which have led up to it. They connote, in fact, a renunciation of the effort, which should be a point of honour with the critic, to render his impressions vividly, to make plain to the reader not merely that he is pleased, but why he is pleased. Instead of rendering the critic has been surrendering. Well, I find these labour-saving words "delightful," "agreeable," "pleasant" all over my notice of Mr. Milne's play. They convict me of being false to my critical honour. Not that the author or his actors are likely to resent words, however vague, of praise. It is my own conscience that reproaches me.

I must plead extenuating circumstances. There are certain plays which simply cannot get their peculiar quality "rendered," their exact flavour reproduced, in a newspaper criticism, and Mr. Milne's are among them. Indeed, I think Mr. Milne is the most difficult of all our dramatists for a critic who desires to be adequate. His particular virtue is in a certain subtlety of dialogue, or rather in a still more subtle thing which is only to be expressed through the dialogue, something which I will call, I hope without pedantry, the peculiar *ethos* of his personages. Of course, every drama, every work of art for that matter, is a function, as the mathematicians say, of the artist himself; it is conditioned by his individual way of taking things, by the angle of his outlook on life. It comes to this, whether with

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Mr. Milne or with anybody else, what one really "likes" in a man's work is the man himself. Not, I need hardly say, the "empirical" man, who wears a certain billycock hat, likes his steak underdone, and lives at No. 1,000, Blank Street, N.W. 53, but the inward and spiritual man, latent in the other and only revealed, or implied, in his works. And so when I said, in commenting on Mr. Milne's new play, "That is the first act, which has kept the house in a perpetual ripple of laughter, you hardly know over what," and added, "Let us say over Mr. Milne's pleasantness, and the pleasantness of everybody concerned" (which gave me an opportunity for a brief catalogue of the cast), I suppose what really pleased me was directly the *ethos*, the characteristic spirit and air, of Mr. Milne's personages, and indirectly the æsthetic individuality of Mr. Milne himself. Now these impressions and sub-impressions and sub-sub-impressions of subtle things constitute precisely the critic's difficulties. How is he to give "a local habitation and a name" to these "airy nothings"? There are, I conjecture, analogous difficulties for the critics of painting and music, which in their case must remain insuperable. How are you to "render" in a notice the impression aroused by the glowing sun in Turner's "Fighting Téméraire"? How are you to "render" the thrill of a particular B flat vibrating from Suggia's violoncello? It simply cannot be done. But the thing is *not* insuperable in theatrical criticism. It

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could be done, approximately at any rate, by copious (and skilful) quotations from the dialogue of the play. "Considerations of space," however, to say nothing of an infirm memory, forbid. And so the poor critic is driven to fob his reader off with the usual vague "delightful," "agreeable," and "pleasant."

There is another kind, a very different kind, of play, of which it is difficult to render the critical impression. I mean the mediocre play, with ideas that are true but commonplace and not worth expressing, emotions that are not worth feeling, dialogue plausible enough but without distinction, characters that move and speak but are only half alive. Work of this sort depresses the critic, who is *ex hypothesi* a sophisticated playgoer, out of all proportion to its demerits, because he knows it puts him at variance with the unsophisticated many in the audience, who in all probability are greedily swallowing what he finds nauseating. If he is a churl, he incontinently damns the whole thing. But I am considering criticism of the kind which regards churlishness as itself uncritical. The favourite refuge of this kind is irony—and that is a dangerous weapon that probably inflicts more injustice than simple churlishness.

With what joy, then, the critic welcomes the "easy ones"! There is the play of overwhelming passion that sends him away with his brain afire and his blood tingling, the sort of play that he couldn't

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not write about to save his life—a rare occurrence, but, when it does happen, a great experience. There is the drama “of ideas,” as it used to be called—for it is mainly a thing of the past—often enough bad drama, of worse ideas. But ideas are, or should be, the critic’s stock-in-trade. There he feels at home, he has something, in Byron’s phrase, to break his mind upon. Besides, ideas can be put down in black and white, they are easier to share out with the reader than sub-sub-impressions of atmosphere and *ethos*. Then there is the outrageously bad play, so easy to turn without compunction into fun. Of this class, at any rate, there is no lack, and critics, therefore, need not always be wishing they had never been born.

CURIOSITY

MANY of us have a soft spot in our hearts for astronomers. They are rare ; they are mysterious ; and they are solitaires. They know the names and habits of stars that to us are mere anonymous twinklings in a sky we are only vaguely conscious of. My favourite astronomer is Fontenelle. He was at once an astronomer and a man of the world, which seems to be making the best of both. In his " *Pluralité des Mondes* " (a title, by the way, which suggests the inadequacy of " both ") he tells of a conversation with a Marquise in a Park under the midnight sky. Obedient to the man of the world in him, he tried to flirt with her. But she, the minx, appealed to the astronomer. Show me, she said, how the earth goes round the sun. And he, though annoyed that his attempts at flirtation should be thus frustrated, obligingly showed her. He subsequently lived to be over 100, which indicates the tenacity of the astronomical as compared with the amorous life. Another venerable French astronomer, M. Camille Flammarion, the other day communicated his presidential address to the Society for Psychical Research, and in the course of it mentioned a matter

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that interests me. "Was curiosity a fault? He thought not. Curiosity was the source of all discovery, and they could only praise it."

Bravo! Now that a grave astronomer has said it, we others may safely repeat it. For there is no doubt that curiosity is generally treated as a fault. Children are bidden by their elders not to be curious. "Feminine curiosity" is a term of reproach that is constantly being thrown at the fair sex. Curiosity is a desire for knowledge, for experience; and it legitimately prevails, therefore, with children, who start without any knowledge at all, and women, from whom knowledge of many topics is perversely withheld. Then there is "idle curiosity," or the desire for useless knowledge, and "impertinent curiosity," or desire for knowledge about your neighbour's private affairs. These are the two *species* of curiosity that have given the *genus* its bad name. But it is necessary to distinguish. In these cases the emotion of curiosity in itself is not condemned. It is the antecedent state of mind. For every desire must be preceded by some idea, however vague, of the thing desired. Am I curious about the private affairs of my neighbour, about the age of his wife or the hour he gets up in the morning? That is because my own consciousness is filled with such piffling matters, to the exclusion of subjects worthier of "a being of large discourse, looking before and after." Our curiosities will be limited by the quality of our consciousness. Little minds will be curious about

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little things. But it is the mind we condemn, not the curiosity.

And we are apt to despise the curiosities we don't share. It may be that I have never been to a football match, never been to the Derby, never willingly attended any event that involves the presence of large crowds, and I may wonder at the thousands whose curiosity persuades them, at immense personal discomfort, to throng to these things. But their curiosity is more genial and human than my indifference. The billiard room at my club is on the top floor, and I have never had the curiosity to go upstairs and look at it. But the man (not a billiard player) who does shows a more complete desire for knowledge; he will know better than I what the club on the whole is like. Even scientific men seem to limit their curiosities a little capriciously. "Eminent men of learning," said M. Flammarion, "did not feel that penetrating emotion, and even looked askance at it." Thus Le Verrier, the discoverer of Neptune, was once asked if he would like to see it by M. Flammarion, who had turned his telescope upon the planet. "No, no," was the answer; "as a matter of fact I never have seen it." He had discovered its position by mathematics, and "except for mathematics he had little curiosity."

If curiosity is the source of all scientific discovery, it is the very stuff of which dramatic emotion is made. The most elementary form of it in the theatre

CURIOSITY

is the desire to know what is going to happen next. The born dramatist is he who leaves you at the end of each act in a state of intense curiosity as to what the next act will bring forth. When all is settled and our curiosity is satisfied, any continuation of the play is mere anti-climax, mere surplusage. Hence so many "disappointing last acts." I think Sir Arthur Pinero is the master who has shown the greatest skill in provoking our curiosity and keeping it alive, and yet his last acts have a way of falling flat. Partly, no doubt, because he seems to "funk" his actual *dénouement*, and "to play for safety" with some whitewashing cleric handy; but partly also because he has satisfied our curiosity to the full before he gets to the end of his play. Think of the intense curiosity excited in Act III. of *Quex* as to how Sophy and Quex are each going to get out of their tangle. By the end of the act they have got out of it, and in Act IV. we have hardly any curiosity left. Not that curiosity demands to be satisfied by surprise. It is a sound canon of dramaturgy that the playwright should never have a secret from his audience, his proper aim being not to spring an unforeseen conclusion upon his audience, but to make them eagerly desire a certain conclusion and then to satisfy that desire to the full. But if there should be no curiosity about the *what* there should be the liveliest about the *how*. With a classic our curiosity, of course, will be about the rendering. We most of us were familiar with *Ghosts* before the Duse played it; but we were all

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legitimately curious to see how she was going to treat it.

Further, a new play of which the development can be plainly seen in advance leaves us cold, because it offers nothing to our curiosity. And yet I confess to being one of those who look at the end of a "detective story" before reading it. This seems inconsistent, and I hardly know how to explain it. Probably it is because the interest of curiosity in such tales is so puerile that I prefer to substitute for it the interest of watching the ingenuity with which the author contrives to go on hiding a secret—which is no secret for me. That, after all, is only curiosity in another form.

THE "MIXTURE OF A LIE"

IN one of his Author's Notes, Mr. Conrad remarks of a story that "it is true enough in its essentials. The sustained invention of a really telling lie demands a talent which I do not possess." This quasi-humorous misuse of the word "lie" is not uncommon among authors. M. Anatole France, in his recent "*Vie en Fleur*," says: "In these stories I have lied but little, and never about the essential things; but it may be I have lied enough to instruct and please. Truth has never been contemplated in its nudity. Fiction, fable, story, myth, these are the disguises under which mankind has always known and loved it." Again: "I love truth. I believe humanity has need of it; but assuredly it has still greater need of the lie that flatters it, consoles it, gives it infinite hopes. Without the lie, it would perish of boredom and despair." This is but an amplification of Bacon's famous "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure."

All these writers are giving a twist to the word "lie" for their own purposes. They are suggesting an identity, which does not exist, between the fiction which is a practical act, a deliberate invention to deceive, and the fiction which does not belong to the world of practice but of pure intuition. Possibly

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the suggestion is a survival of the ancient confusion between the two—a confusion which led Solon, so the story goes, to ask Thespis how he could tell so many lies, and moved Plato to exclude poets from his Republic. Mr. Conrad, of course, merely means that he cannot compass a work of pure imagination ; that he must have some basis of observed or remembered fact to go upon. Bacon and M. France are merely adverting to the distinction between art and history.

This distinction Croce was the first to make perfectly clear. "Art represents desires ; history, actions. History distinguishes between the real and the imaginary ; art is incapable of any such distinction. History is perception and memory of perceptions and in it fancies and imaginations are also perceived as such and assigned their place. And it would also be possible to say that art represents only desires, and is therefore all fancy and never perception, all possible reality and never effectual reality. But since to art is wanting the distinctive criterion between desires and actions, it in truth represents actions as desires and desires as actions, the real as possible, and the possible as real ; hence it would be more correct to say that art is on the near side of the possible and the real, it is pure of these distinctions, and is therefore pure imagination or *pure intuition*." (Croce's "Pratica.")

In thus purely objectifying his wishes, desires, aspirations, ideals, the artist gets pleasure and com-

THE "MIXTURE OF A LIE"

municates his pleasure to the reader or listener or spectator. This, or pure æsthetic, pleasure is the "pleasure" Bacon and M. France really have in mind. In so far as history is a bare chronicle of fact, no æsthetic pleasure arises. It may be objected that history never is a bare chronicle of fact (which is what M. France means when he says "Truth has never been contemplated in its nudity"), that it always has its *expressive*, or artistic, side. True, but it is enough to say that fact, as such, gives no pleasure, which can only be added by art (or what Bacon calls "the mixture of a lie"). And Mr. Conrad (in another author's note) puts this truth in his own vigorous, incisive way when he speaks of "the curse of fact, the blessing of illusion."

It seems just as well to clear up this question of pleasurable "lying." Otherwise we might incautiously put Ananias among the great artists of the world, and unkindly rank the latest novelist along with the latest perjurer in the Divorce Courts. But there is another point about the distinction between art and history to which it may be worth while to draw attention. I again quote Croce :—

Desires and actions are, we know, of the same stuff, and art assumes that stuff just as it is, careless of the new elaboration that it will receive in an ulterior grade of the spirit [*e.g.*, history], which is, indeed, impossible without that first and merely fantastic elaboration. Likewise when art takes possession of historical material, it removes from it just the historical character, the critical elements; and by this very fact reduces it once more to mere intuition.

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Let us then avoid the common blunder of criticizing an historical novelist or dramatist as though he were an historian. Paradox though it may seem, what you really witness when you see *Cromwell* at His Majesty's or *Robert E. Lee* at the Regent is not any real personage at all, but the objectification, within certain limits of historical fact, of Mr. John Drinkwater's desires, wishes, aspirations, ideals. In strictness, perhaps, the distinction between the historical dramatist or novelist and others is purely arbitrary. It is a difference of degree rather than of kind. The author of "David Copperfield" was not less an historical novelist than the author of "Quentin Durward." So would be any novelist whose work involved perceptions or memories of the real. The only genuinely unhistorical novelists would be those—if any such there be—whose works are of imagination all compact, "the sustained invention," in Mr. Conrad's phrase, "of a really telling lie."

NEW ISMS

ONE of the disconcerting things about this world of ours is that, as Galileo remarked, *si muove*. It has a perpetual "move on." And the difficulty is to keep up with it. Some of us, by the time we have cut our wisdom-teeth, find that we cannot stay the pace and cast about for some comfortable resting-place from which we may quietly watch the others still staggering breathlessly along, time them at each lap, and, if we have a fancy for public congratulations, gracefully offer the laurel to the victors. ("Offering the laurel to the victors"—cannot you see the picture? The offerer is holding out the gift to the victors, but turns his face away from them to stare with a broad smile at the camera-man.) One of the quietest of these resting-places used to be the English Theatre. All was change and bustle without, the great race was always being run, but within, all was peace and comfort. Nothing, at any rate nothing to speak of, happened there. Then, somewhere about the 'nineties, Ibsen broke in and disturbed the peace. Ibsenites and Anti-Ibsenites arose and called one another names. Thereafter one Chekhov or Tchekhoff put in an appearance to the general bewilderment. Finally Mr. Bernard Shaw set us all by

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the ears. He first wrote like Ibsen, or in the spirit of Ibsen, but still more like himself. Then he wrote a play in the manner of Chekhov or Tchekhoff, but much more in his own manner. Anyhow, the English Theatre was no longer its old, restful self. It resounded with the din of battle. Ideas hurtled through the air. What a nuisance !

Since the War things have quieted down. A few ideas have still been bursting at intervals inside the English Theatre, but happily they have proved to be "duds." In the long run our souls have been able to commune peacefully with the Dolly Sisters and Mr. George Robey, or, in the words of Mr. Pope,

Thy hand, great Dulness ! lets the curtain fall
And universal darkness buries all.

What makes the darkness visible is the intimation which reaches me from juvenile, and therefore, I assume, infallible sources, that the pre-war veterans already mentioned *are* veterans, whose weight, like that of the elephant in the Cambridge problem, may be neglected. They have faded, these veterans, "into an already long-obsolete past." And serve them right, say I, for having in that long-obsolete past caused such a *fracas* in the English Theatre and disturbed the unoffending rest-cure patients there. But how do they come to have obsolesced (if I may coin a verb) all in a row like that ?

Ah ! thereby hangs a tale. It is a tale told (at least to me) in various American studies of the modern drama. High-brow studies, of course. It

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appears to me that the high brows in America are just a trifle higher than elsewhere. Action and reaction are equal and in opposite directions, and I suppose it is because the "commercial" spirit is to be found at its maximum in America that the anti-commercial or high-brow spirit is at its maximum there too. At any rate, they speculate more idealistically in America than elsewhere about the future of the drama and dismiss its past with more decisive emphasis. The old drama, it seems (so ably represented by our three obsolete veterans), was Realistic. That still lingers in the commercial theatres of both hemispheres, patronized by the Philistine millions who don't count. But the new drama is waiting round the corner, and "werry fierce." It is not going to hold the mirror up to nature or any of that old "bunk" once good enough for the Realistic theatre. It is going to devote itself to Expressionism, and its acting is going to be Presentational.

Now, this is really too bad! Just as we had comfortably settled ourselves down in the English theatre, to enjoy another period of treatment for brain-fag, to commune soulfully with the Dolly Sisters and Mr. George Robey, our nerves are set quivering with these dreadful visions of the future, with such difficult names, too! What is Expressionism? One authority defines it as "a meeting of the fringes of the conscious and the unconscious, and the meeting is startling indeed." It would be, I quite agree, especially to psychologists. It appears

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to have been made in Germany. If this fact were more generally known, I dare say the English view of the Ruhr occupation would be different. But stay! We have already, here in London, seen an Expressionist play, or rather two of them, *The Insect Play* and *R.U.R.* of the Brothers Capek. I attended both performances, but, somehow, missed the meeting of the conscious and unconsconscious fringes. But, says my American authority, "none of this, of course, is Expressionism very far on its way. . . . But it is not difficult to believe that there is something of the future in it. It is a sign."

There you are again! Threats about the future! Always wanting to make our flesh creep! And what is the second boggy? Presentational acting. Here you are:—"An actor who admits that he is an actor, and that he has an audience before him, and that it is his business to charm and move this audience by the brillianee of his art, is a presentational actor." Why, is that all? Have I been terrified for nothing? For surely this is the very kind of acting we have been enjoying with our friends of old, Mr. George Robey and the Dolly Sisters? I breathe again.

But we have not yet seen these old favourites in the Expressionist drama. When we do I hope they will escape the dreadful fate of two Teutonic favourites. Fritz Kortner and Werner Krause. Listen to this from the current *Theatre Arts Monthly* of New York:—

A delirious period of representational renunciation set in, in

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which all form was eliminated save the form of disembodied passion. Artistic unity *as well as the foreign exchange* [the italics are mine] compelled an austere simplicity bordering on nudity. Light and colour no longer identified objects. They identified ideas. . . . Forgetful of their ripening girths the Fritz Kortners and Werner Krauses strove pitifully to fashion a gesture commensurate with the days. They leapt. They shouted. They chanted. But they remained withal horribly real. Against etherealized walls and towers their bodies still trumpeted a three-dimensioned fullness. They simply refused to melt into the dissolved frame of the liberated stage. It was an exasperating situation.

It must have been. Imagine three-dimensional trumpeters with ripening girths simply refusing to melt ! Let Mr. George Robey beware of that ripening girth ! Let the Dolly Sisters remember that even they are three-dimensional ! Fortunately the foreign exchange is at present in their favour.

PERSONALITY

PERSONALITY is at once the life and the bane of the stage. There could be no acting without it. For the actor is the one artist whose medium of expression is his physical self. He can never escape from that, however cleverly he may disguise it. Indeed, mere cleverness in disguise generally indicates the mediocre actor. It is not in the presence of the great actors that you exclaim "What a wonderful make up!" Yet acting is not the art of exploiting physical peculiarities. It is the mind, the imagination, the temperament that matter. The actor has to comprehend his part in every detail, to project himself imaginatively into it, and then to recreate it with his temperament and his physical means. Obviously, the closer the accord between his temperament and that of the imagined personage, the better the performance. Hence the common reproach against certain actors of "playing themselves" is often no reproach but a commendation. In the lucky cases of coincidence of actual and imagined temperaments, it is the best thing they can do. It is the unlucky cases, where there is no such coincidence, that give ground for reproach. But the reproach should be directed against the luck rather than against the actor. For, do what he will, the actor cannot play

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his part with any other temperament than his own. Where the temperament is a fine one, aided by a fine intelligence and imagination—in other words, where there is great acting—the twist given to the imagined personage is of minor account. For instance, when Duse played Paula Tanqueray, she did not present Pinero's heroine but a being of much finer clay—something exotic, orchidaceous. So, too, her Mirandolina was less Goldoni's innkeeper than a fairy princess. In each case, she betrayed the author, simply because she couldn't help it; she ennobled, glorified the parts with her own choicest temperament; and only pedants can have felt aggrieved at the substitution.

But there are actors, generally comic actors these, without much mind or imagination, whose personality is allowed to dominate and override every part they undertake. With them, you can never see the part for the actor. It may be that they are endowed with a personality naturally comic; experience has taught them that, by simply being themselves, they can always provoke laughter; and so they go on for ever being themselves and nothing but themselves. Nobody expects Mr. George Robey or Miss Connie Ediss to *impersonate* a set of imaginary characters; they are comic enough in themselves. I remember seeing Mr. Robey once playing Louis XV. The wig, costume, star and sash belonged to the character, all the rest was the Mr. Robey that we know. For performers such as these the real home is

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the music-hall, which exists—and I am not pretending it is a bad reason for existence—for the exhibition of personality, pure and simple. Better to laugh at a good “turn,” than yawn over a dull play. But I am speaking, for the moment, of the art of acting.

Though personality is the basis of that art, it must not be cultivated for its own sake. And that is where many playgoers, perhaps the majority, encourage the ruin of the art. They look at the theatre from the music-hall point of view and are more interested in the exhibition of personality than in the art of acting. They are at no pains to consider the play as a whole, as a picture of life, as a work of art; they are only concerned to “follow” a favourite actor, and to see that he executes his accustomed tricks, that he is “himself.” For it is much easier, more “human,” as we say, to take an interest in persons than in art. To appreciate art involves the exercise of mind and imagination, and *ne fait pas ce tour qui veut*; whereas curiosity about persons, their looks, their habits, is not only within the range, but the daily occupation, of the average, sensual man. This, of course, is true not merely of the theatre. Personal gossip about politicians is much more popular than an understanding of their political ideas. “Gentlemen with dusters” know this. How many of the people who are aware that Renan was a fat man with a large nose and a devoted sister could give you an intelligible account of

PERSONALITY

Renanism ? Personality—and personalities—will always constitute the staple of average human interest.

No wonder, then, that actors are tempted, in season and out of season, to “act themselves.” Their “followers” see to that. Occasionally this persistent public demand for personality encourages the actor to a curious exhibition of it. Not content with acting “himself” in the ordinary sense, *i.e.*, with presenting his own temperament, his own natural gifts, unchastened by art, he essays to present what philosophers would call his “empirical” self, *i.e.*, the accidental personage of daily life, the man who ate a mutton chop for yesterday’s lunch and will visit the barber’s to-morrow. Something of this kind was to be seen not long ago at the St. James’s Theatre, where you had mother (an accomplished actress) and daughter (a *débutante*) actually *playing* those two people. It was a family affair, and every allowance must be made for the impulse of family affection. But the artistic interest of the play clearly could not compete with that of the odd coincidence of representation and reality ; the personal element for the majority of playgoers far outweighed the artistic element. In her first-night speech, Miss Isabel Jay had to protest against the supposition that the play was founded in any way on the real lives of the performers. •But it would have been better if such a supposition had been impossible.

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The very first-night " notices " that were quoted in the play were appropriately enough entirely personal. They spoke of the leading actress, and ignored the play. I believe these are the " notices " that all actors, and most of the public, desire to read. But they are the notices that few critics desire, or will permit themselves, to write. The personal part of dramatic criticism is to most of us an odious necessity, to be handled as gingerly as possible, and to be in any case postponed to consideration of the play as a work of art, a picture of life. For any critic worthy of the name is far less interested in persons than in ideas. Ideas are the joy, the luxury, the cherished playthings of criticism. Ideas, and only ideas, make it worth while.

THE PLAYER'S SHARE

It was a theory of the late Professor Raleigh's, put forward in his brilliant monograph on Shakespeare, that the poetic drama in England vanished with the disappearance of the boy-actors. When the actresses came in, with their airs and graces and all the seductions of their womanhood, they rather thrust the author out. Shakespeare, he thought, had particularly suffered from the actresses' obtrusive personality, which was not content with mere interpretation, but substituted the charm of sex for that of pure poetry. (I should have preferred to quote the Professor textually, but cannot, for a familiar reason. When you are writing in town, the book you want to refer to is sure to be in the country, and *vice versa*. This is one of the vexations with which Queen Mab, the goddess of *contretemps*, delights to tease the race of scribblers.) With boy-actors, the Professor seems to have thought, there was nothing to distract the attention from the author's words.

This strikes one as a somewhat perverse paradox. Was the Professor a womanhater? Surely a woman is more accurately represented by a woman than by any boy? And did not Shakespeare imagine his female characters as women, rather than as andro-

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gynes ? The fact that he was writing them for boys to act may have been not without its influence, but that can hardly have made for pure poetry. Indeed, Lord Chesterfield is said to have explained to Queen Caroline what he held to be the coarseness of many of Shakespeare's heroines on this very ground. Be that as it may, it largely explains the "epicene" element in Shakespeare, the frequent disguises of girls as boys and of boys as girls.

What really underlies the Professor's protest against the vagaries of women in Shakespearean parts is an objection to the whole art of acting. Theoretically, it is an art of strict interpretation. But in practice it must always go a little outside that. The dramatist imagines a character, but he has to entrust its representation on the stage to a real person, with a mind and temperament and individuality of his own. Can the two, the imagined character and the real actor, ever be made absolutely to coincide ? No, because in this world of phenomena there are no duplicates. There can only be approximation—and the closest approximation occurs, no doubt, in the exceptional case when the dramatist has conceived his character with a particular actor in his mind's eye. Strict identity there cannot be. Did Dick Burbage show Shakespeare's Hamlet ? No, he showed Shakespeare's Hamlet within the limits of his own personality, and modified, coloured by it. No one, as I have had occasion to remark before, has ever seen Shakespeare's Hamlet on the

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stage, and no one ever will see. Acting, then, is only roughly an art of interpretation. We speak of the "executive" arts, but there is always an x in them, the x of the executant's personality. Paderewski's "version" of the Sonata Pathétique is not Busoni's. Tree's Shylock was not Irving's, and neither was, neither could ever be, Shakespeare's. They were "versions," varying as the x varies. You may, with luck, reduce x to a minimum; but never does $x = 0$.

This indestructibility of x has, in Charles Surface's phrase, given many worthy gentlemen much uneasiness. It led Lamb to protest whimsically against Mrs. Siddons's Lady Macbeth and Kean's Richard III. It led Hazlitt to declare that "the actors put him out." And it leads hosts of people to prefer reading Shakespeare or Webster or Congreve to seeing them acted in the theatre. On the printed page the author's imagination comes into direct contact with the reader's; there is no x in the way to divert the current or break the contact. On the other hand, the hosts who flock to the theatre do so because for them $x = \text{life}$. To have the sensation of life they are willing to pay the price—to forgo the direct impact of the author's pure, unalloyed imagination.

But in the case of what we call "great" acting x means much more than life. It means a distinct asset, a sense of power or of curious subtlety, or of the ludicrous, or of sheer beauty, which is something

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contributed by the actor over and above the author's contribution of his imagined character. There are times when this added energy is so potent as to upset the balance of the play—I rather fancy that must have happened with both Mrs. Siddons's Lady Macbeth and Kean's Richard. This shocks the fastidious (fastidiousness was by no means the "note" of the theatre of Kean and the Siddons), and, indeed, all who dislike seeing a work of art obscured or obliterated by a personal exhibition. Professor Raleigh, no doubt, had such misadventures in mind when he evolved his bizarre theory about actresses in Shakespeare's plays. But, so long as the artistic balance is undisturbed, the added force is all clear gain. It is clear gain with Eleonora Duse. She dominates the scene, but never wrecks it, never even warps it. Her art is at once interpretative and beautifying. Her Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts*, for instance, is in all essentials Ibsen's, only of somewhat finer clay. Ibsen's is a domestic figure, a picture of maternal solicitude, and a clear-sighted woman who has to expound and defend her case against social orthodoxy as embodied in Pastor Manders. So is the Duse's; she does nothing, emphasizes nothing, misses nothing that an intelligent reader of the text is unprepared for. And yet the total effect is a revelation, a surprise. Mrs. Alving has become exalted in the scale of being, a personage of high distinction, "somebody." How is this achieved? Partly by outward and visible signs, by the poise of

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the spare form, the contour of the arm uplifted or despairingly dropped, the flicker and flutter of the hands ; but chiefly by an inward and spiritual grace, the temperament that is steeped in beauty and instils its beauty into everything it touches. And in admiration of that you are stricken with the futility of evaluating *x*.

CHARACTER IN FICTION

A PAPER in that highly interesting periodical the *Criterion* tempts me to comment, a paper by Mrs. Virginia Woolf, which seems to have been previously read to a society with the alluring name of the Cambridge Heretics, on "Character in Fiction." We can be heretics without going to Cambridge, and I should like to express my dissent from the orthodox doctrine of Mrs. Woolf. I say orthodox, because she holds with the world at large (and more particularly with Mr. Arnold Bennett) that the vital thing in a novel is the study of character. She quotes Mr. Bennett:—"The foundation of good fiction is character creating and nothing else . . . style counts ; plot counts ; originality of outlook counts. But none of these counts anything like so much as the convincingness of the characters. If the characters are real the novel will have a chance ; if they are not, oblivion will be its portion. . . ."

I am well aware that most people are of this opinion. They break novels up into the components of characterization, style, plot, and so forth, and say the greatest of these is characterization. They classify novels by the subject-matter as novels of character, novels of incident, novels of manners,

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military novels, sporting novels, slum novels, detective novels, *e via dicendo*. On the same principle pictures are classified as landscapes, seascapes, portraits, anecdote pictures, etc. There is nothing to be said against such a classification as a mere convenience. But I submit that it is irrelevant and entirely false as a criterion of distinction between novelist and novelist, artist and artist. To say that Constable painted landscapes and Turner seascapes and Franz Hals portraits gives us no insight into the art of Constable, Turner, or Hals. To say that the novels of Miss Austen or Tolstoy are studies of character is to tell us nothing distinctive about the art of Miss Austen or Tolstoy.

We are misled by these categories of mere convenience. We are especially misled when we say that such and such a category indicates superiority and another inferiority. A novel is a work of art and, as such, the expression of the artist's intuitions. Who is to say that his intuitions will result in good or bad expression according as they come from this or that source? That only intuitions of character successfully expressed (or, in Mr. Bennett's words, "the convincingness of the characters") "count," and that other intuitions, however successfully expressed, comparatively do not? How can we lay down any such hard-and-fast law? Shall we not rather say that the artist does not pick and choose his intuitions, but gets them where he can, from life at large or rather from the vision of life imposed on

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him by his individual temperament ? Life, of course, is mainly exhibited in the concrete examples of human beings, their characters and actions, and the artist's vision of life can hardly avoid them. The novel in general, then, will almost automatically be a novel of character. But that is not the contention of Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Woolf. They say in effect that the novel, to be a good novel, *must* be a novel of character ; that only the " creation " of character " counts." Mrs. Woolf, to be sure, seems at one moment inclined to hedge. After instancing various great novels—and I don't carp at her list—she adds : " In all these novels, all these great novelists have brought us to see whatever they wish us to see through some character. Otherwise they would not be novelists, but poets, historians, or pamphleteers." Quite so. But isn't this getting a long way from Mr. Bennett's position ? We all understand that a novelist is not speaking in his own person (or, if he does, so much the less novelist he), that he must bring us to see whatever he wishes us to see *through* some character, but that, I need hardly say, is a very different thing from the elaboration of character in itself.

Let us take one of Mrs. Woolf's instances, " *Pride and Prejudice*." According to our rough classification for convenience, we should certainly have to call that a novel of character. In thinking of it, we think of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy, of Lady Catherine and Mr. Collins. But will any one contend

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that it is the "convincingness" of these characters that establishes the quintessential quality of Miss Austen's art? Certainly they are "convincing" because the artist's intuitions have been successfully expressed. But isn't there much more in it than that? Does not our pleasure arise, not from the author's concentration upon character, but from her humour, her irony, her implications, her whole outlook on life? To dissect the book into characters, plot, style, is to kill it. They are all rolled into one, form and content are one, and "Pride and Prejudice" is *not* great because it is a novel of character, but because it is a novel by Jane Austen. I will suggest another example, "The Ambassadors" of Henry James, which is the most conspicuous case I know of a novelist "bringing us to see whatever he wants us to see *through* some character." Everything in the book is seen through the eyes of Strether; it is marvellous, indeed, the way in which the author sticks to that single point of view—he seems to be doing it for a wager. Strether has a character that is minutely elaborated by the way, the "peripety," the complete revolution in his character in the course of the story, is one of its chief points. But it would be absurd to call "The Ambassadors" a novel of character. It is that incidentally, but only incidentally; the real point of the book is elsewhere, in its presentation of moods and minds, in its piquant contrasts of New England puritanism and the lighter, easier *ethos* of cultured Paris. If "The

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Ambassadors" is (as I venture to think) a great novel, it is great not as a novel of character, but because it is a novel of Henry James at his best.

I suggest, then, that we abandon this habit of classifying novels by their subject-matter, giving good marks to one category ("character"), and marks not so good to any of the others, and recognize that the art of the novelist consists in the spirit which informs it—the veracity, the sensitiveness, the vividness—and not in the matter on which it works. In a sense, as I have freely admitted, every novel must be a novel of character, but its quintessential virtue for us may be something quite different. Take the most recent of all examples, "*A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*." How crowded that canvas is with every type of character! What a stupendous feat of character-creating is Charlus! Yet we know that the most valuable things in the whole work are not the characters, but the ideas, the new and really exciting exposure to view of the secrets of the mind, and the delicate sense of what may be called temporal colour. . . . I beg pardon, I had forgotten Mrs. Woolf, whose article, for that matter, pursues a path too difficult for my feet. She divides certain novelists into two sets, Edwardian and Georgian, and I happen to have found it, in Mr. Birrell's immortal phrase, "easy and even helpful" to read very little of one set and nothing at all of the other. Further, she has discovered that

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“on or about December, 1910, human character changed.” I wonder if this prodigious event escaped Old Moore—but why worry about almanacs, isn’t human character changing every blessed moment of our lives ?

UNTIDY CHARM

WITH some of the fiercer, or post-war, French critics the cult of the *épithète rare* is a devouring passion. I lighted on one the other day in a somewhat unexpected quarter, the "Round the Shops" of a morning journal. It seemed the ingenious M. Paul Poiret had had a *revue* of fashions at the Duke of York's Theatre, and among the wonders he displayed "there was a shiny black satin coat and skirt, with a white tunic longer than the coat, which had an untidy charm, and was made with godet frills, etc." Godet frills leave me cold, as they are for me precisely what "gowans" were for Mr. Micawber on the festive occasion when he parenthetized "whatever gowans may be." But "untidy charm" is good, and quite worth wandering round the shops to find. There you have the *épithète rare*. And for these epithets there is a hidden law of periodicity that shall some day be revealed. The word "charm" has exceptional luck—as we must at present call it—with them. A story is told of the late Mr. Henry James that he described an actress who had importuned him by a visit as "not without a certain cadaverous charm." But "untidy" is better than "cadaverous," because less cruel and

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of more philosophic significance. For untidiness *has* a charm of its own, as not only M. Paul Poiret knows, but all the other illustrious people who deign to "create" the fashions in women's frocks. Indeed, it is the sole charm discoverable in many of these frocks. In the Victorian age they were stiff, voluminous, with a foible for the *baroque* in ornament, but never untidy. Symmetry in design was the darling sin of that age, and symmetry is only a form of tidiness. Women had waists then and other anatomical peculiarities—to speak with discreet vagueness—which seem now, in the general untidiness, to have disappeared. There were hooks and eyes, too, and even buttons which really buttoned in those days—things making for tidiness and the steady employment of ladies' maids—whereas (I am told) garments nowadays require no fastenings. You begin to appreciate the phrase "untidy charm." There is more in it than meets the eye.

To go back a little farther—for the world, though this may be a surprise to the Neo-Georgians, did not begin with Queen Victoria—the eighteenth was at once the tidiest and the untidiest of centuries. There is the notorious "correctness" of Pope and the roundness of the Round Pond (though that may have been a little later), and the ordered symmetry of Pulteney Street, Bath; but there is some remarkable untidiness in Fielding's inns and Smollett's carouses. Though Johnson's laboured antitheses may be ponderous, they are tidiness itself, but, when

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he thrust in between Beauclerk and Mme. de Boufflers to conduct the lady to her carriage, he was the untidiest of men. "His dress was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose." It would be unfair to insist on the untidiness of Hogarth's "Gin Lane," for that is part of the artist's deliberate intention; but you will find it as rampant in the fashionable circles of his "Mariage à la mode." Isn't the characteristic of their music a certain dainty tidiness in the symmetrical, almost geometrical, arrangement of its themes? This is the sort of music that Hogarth's "Enraged Musician" must have been playing when he was interrupted by the bawling untidiness and disorder of the London street.

All the arts have shifted now to the farthest extreme of untidiness. We have *vers libres*, or versification of which untidiness is the very principle, untidy novels which begin in the middle and end nowhere, futurist and cubist pictures which regard untidiness as the supreme virtue. The "well-made" piece has been superseded by plays deliberately ill-made, *i.e.*, untidy. What is the typical sculpture of the day? Rodin's "Balzac," an untidy effigy of an untidy man. Scriabin's music is untidy. The untidy saxophone lures a crowd of untidily dressed people to untidy dancing. So with architecture. Nash's Regent Street was charmingly tidy. Look at Regent

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Street to-day ! I say nothing of the people who decorate the Parks with scraps of paper and empty ginger-beer bottles, though they, too, are modern artists of a kind—the Dada-ist kind. The whole world seems to be whirling in a mad revel of untidiness, like the tipsy boors in a Dutch picture.

Isn't this the principle underlying the opposed ideals of classic and romantic ? Greek statuary, Latin prose, French tragedy, the verses of Boileau, the essays of Addison, the paintings of Nicholas Poussin, the precepts of Lord Chesterfield, the tastes of Horace Walpole, the singing of Farinelli, and the acting of Talma were all tidy. The plays of Shakespeare (it was the real gist of Voltaire's complaint) were untidy, Hugo's preface to *Cromwell* was a manifesto of untidiness, Gautier's red waistcoat and uncut hair were an act of homage to it. What makes Marcel Proust's prose so difficult to read is its untidiness, but that also contributes to its charm, its "untidy charm," to revert to our original *épithète rare*. Classicism said, in error, only the tidy is charming ; no, replied Romanticism, there is also an untidy charm. I suggest that we here find the fundamental bone of contention between the Labour Ministry and the Bolsheviks. So far, at any rate, our Labour legislation, whatever else you may say about it, has been tidy. This naturally infuriates the untidy Bolsheviks. . . . And now I will go and ask those who know to explain to me the inward significance of godet frills.

ROCK GARDENING

IT must be nearly a score of years ago that I saw, for the first and last time, a rock garden on the stage. The scene was Drury Lane ; the garden (built on a hemispherical mound and arranged in strict terraces, was the heroine's ; and she sat (in calm contempt of orthodox horticulture) on her saxifrages. It was one of those autumn dramas, traditional at this theatre ever since the palmy days of Sir Augustus Harris, which combine the attractions of the stage and the newspaper, give you a story of romantic adventure in a setting of actuality, and if they do not precisely "hold the mirror up to nature," do reproduce for you the very "form and pressure" of the time. In other words, they are not only "actual," but "topical." They register the current catchword, the passing craze of the moment. For the historian of English society they must be invaluable *mémoires pour servir*. The fact, then, that a score of years ago a Drury Lane heroine not only had a rock garden but sat on it is significant. It indicates that rock gardening was then a fashion, followed by many people who neither loved it for its own sake nor understood it, but wished to be like the rest of the world.

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Is it a fashion still ? Or has it settled down to be a regular horticultural feature like the rose garden, the herbaceous border, or the potato patch ? The question has to be asked because the vicissitudes of gardening fashions have always been capricious. "Bedding out" was one of the Victorian idols. With the present century it became anathema. Now, I hear, it is creeping into favour again (and I should like to know what that revered authority, Mr. Robinson, of Gravetye, has to say about it). Shrubberies, thanks to the influence of the ingenious Mr. Repton, were the proper thing in the opening years of the last century. No house in any of Miss Austen's novels was complete without a shrubbery. Emma was wooed by Mr. Knightley in the shrubbery. It was in the shrubbery at Mansfield Park that Edmund Bertram walked with Fanny Price, trying to persuade her to marry Crawford. Sir Walter Elliot, when letting Kellynch Hall, was not fond of the idea of his shrubberies being always approachable. We know what dank wildernesses most of these old shrubberies have now become !

And so I cannot but wonder how the case stands with rock gardening. It isn't so much the changing times that disquiet me ; it is that fatal *nos et*. For, apart from the vagaries of external fashion, we are all prone to a subjective mutability in our gardening likes and dislikes. Serious Scottish gardeners (and most serious gardeners are Scottish) will laugh at me, but I think I was first attracted to rock plants

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by the quaintness of their names. *Saxifraga diapensioides* offered an irresistible lure, and *Oxalis enneaphylla* was "what song the Sirens sang." I was encouraged to pass from words to deeds by one of the most enthusiastic rock gardeners in England, better known to the world at large as a great art critic—my friend "A.C.-B.," whose recent death has been a poignant grief to all who knew him. I can still see his rugged, benign face and the twinkle of his eye as he contemplated the result of my earliest efforts and chaffed me on having achieved a "formal" rock garden. His own, at that time, was like a wild hillside on the lower slopes of the Alps, where you picked your way from surprise to surprise among saxatile things only known to you by repute as "difficult," which under his magic hand came not as single spies but in battalions. To see him crouching over them, coaxing them, patting the surrounding earth (it was a favourite joke of his that he had not had clean hands for a dozen years), working in a little extra leaf-mould over their roots as a treat—Ah me! I like to think that in some quiet corner of the Elysian Fields there is a rock garden, and that "A.C.-B." is treading on the *Gentiana verna* there to keep it firm in the soil, as he used to do in Surrey.

One pictures departed friends in their old familiar ways. It is we survivors who change. Only the other day a visitor asked me the name of one of my rock plants and I couldn't give it! I, whose curiosity

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about them was first aroused by the strange and romantic music of their names! But gardening, after all, is a practical art, not a province of poetry. When you have done clearing the usually appalling crop of weeds from your rock plants in the spring, for a few years or so, you will have had ample time to forget what many of them are called. And this is true, all the garden over. A rose by any other, etc. Indeed, I am beginning to think that a meticulous (may I say meticulous?) insistence upon the niceties of nomenclature in anything is a mark of the tiro. I read lately in a newspaper a notice of a new play more or less to this effect: "Had the play been frankly called, what it is, a farce, we should have roared with laughter. But, as it was misnamed a comedy, we were but mildly amused." As the Americans say, can you beat it?

MRS. EMMET

IN the spring of 1776 Johnson and Boswell were at Lichfield. There was at this time a company of players performing there, whose manager, Mr. Stanton, sent his compliments, and begged leave to wait on Dr. Johnson. Johnson received him very courteously, and he drank a glass of wine with them. He was a plain, decent, well-behaved man, and had the privilege of hearing Johnson describe Garrick's conversation.

When they were by themselves again, Johnson told Boswell, "Forty years ago, Sir, I was in love with an actress here, Mrs. Emmet, who acted Flora in *Hob in the Well*." What merit this lady had, Boswell comments, as an actress, or what was her figure, or her manner, I have not been informed; but, if we may believe Garrick, his old master's taste in theatrical merit was by no means refined; he was not an *elegans formarum spectator*. And that is all we know about Mrs. Emmet from Boswell. A little research enables us to be more precise. Johnson's "forty years" must have been a round number, for he had married his "Tetty" in 1735. He had left Oxford in 1732, and in the same year *Hob in the Well* was revived, after a long interval.

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in London (Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre). It must have taken some little time for the London success to be included in the repertory of a provincial company. If we assign the Mrs. Emmet episode, then, to 1734, we shan't be far out. But this doesn't tell us anything more about the lady herself.

For that, we must accompany Mr. Stanton home after his visit to Dr. Johnson and Boswell, who were staying at "The Three Crowns." Mr. Stanton's lodgings were at "The George," and, like the plain, decent, well-behaved man that he was, he entered them very quietly, almost furtively, and, hanging up his hat, fell to reading a manuscript which he drew from his pocket. It was *Theodosius*, the piece appointed for the following Monday, when the gentlemen from "The Three Crowns" were to attend the performance. "So, Mr. Stanton, you have got back at last from your great friends," cried a matron of heavy, almost masculine appearance, who was toasting a rasher of bacon at the fire for her husband's supper. "And did they treat you handsome?" "I drank a glass of wine with the gentlemen, my dear," replied Mr. Stanton, with some nervousness of manner. "Ah, that I'll go bail you did—drinking wine, like a lord, while your poor wife thinks herself lucky if she gets small ale," and she turned the rasher viciously on the toasting fork. Mr. Stanton thought it better to say nothing, and resumed perusal of *Theodosius*.

"And did he tell you, your great Doctor Johnson,

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that he and I were old acquaintance ? ” “ *You*, my dear ? ” interjected the decent Mr. Stanton, in surprise. “ Yes, *me*, my dear,” echoed his wife, “ and as it’s a couple of score of years ago or more there’s no harm now in my telling you all about it.” “ Bless my soul, Ann,” exclaimed the now thoroughly frightened Mr. Stanton, “ what is there to tell ? ” “ Nothing much, as it happens,” replied his wife, “ and, anyhow, it was years before you and I were joined in Holy Wedlock, but I can tell you this, if I’d liked, I might have been Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Dr. Samuel Johnson, to-day.” “ Pooh, woman,” ejaculated Mr. Stanton, “ this is another of thy romantic taradiddles.” “ ’Tis gospel truth, as I’m alive, and I mind the night well, for it was the night when Mr. Johnson nearly caused a riot by throwing a gentleman into the pit. The man had taken possession of his chair, which had been placed for him between the side-scenes, and rudely refused to give it up, though he had demanded it quite civilly. Upon which Mr. Johnson laid hold of it—I can see him now, the dear, ugly, strong lad!—and tossed both man and chair into the pit. It was *Hob in the Well* we was playing, and I was Flora, and, I give you my word, the tears ran so down my cheeks with laughing that I had to make up all over again before the next act. But, of course, I couldn’t help giving the brave boy a smile ”—“ I recognize you there, my dear,” said decent Mr. Stanton, a little tartly—“ a smile,” pursued the lady, frowning at the inter-

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ruption, “of approval, which I fear must have encouraged him to boldness, for presently he burst into my tiring room, and cast himself on one knee at my feet. ‘Oh, madam,’ he cried, ‘pardon me for intruding on your privacy, but your sweet smile emboldens me to declare the warm but respectful passion my heart has long cherished for you. That you are as virtuous as you are beautiful I make no doubt and, in that assurance, I am not to be tempted by the white bosoms and silk stockings of your fellow-actresses. Be my bride, virtuous one’—‘La, Sir!’ I cut him short, ‘when next you go a-courting, don’t begin by compliments about virtue. Some women have none to speak of, and those who have think speech about it comes least well from a lover.’ For I will not deny, husband, I was wondering why *my* silk stockings weren’t as tempting as any other woman’s. . . . And the long and the short of it was, I refused him, as I found he hadn’t a penny piece. And what did he do the very next morning but go and beg nasty, painted, old Lizzie Porter to be his bride, which she did with uncommon joy, for she was old enough to be his mother.” But by this time the rasher was done to a turn, and the honest couple sat down to it, indulging at the same time in libations of that Lichfield ale which Boniface, in *The Beaux Stratagem*, recommends with such an eloquent jollity.

On the Monday night Johnson and Boswell went to the theatre in due course, as Boswell records, and

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saw *Theodosius*, with *The Stratford Jubilee*. Boswell says he was happy to see Dr. Johnson sitting in a conspicuous part of the pit, and receiving affectionate homage from all his acquaintance. But what neither of them saw was the rather grim matron peering from the wings with a quiet smile at that conspicuous part of the pit. Of what was she thinking? Of what *might* have been, if she had only said Yes? Or of the silk stockings she used to wear?

IN GLUBBDUBRIB

HIS highness the governor of Glubbdubrib ordered me to call up whatever persons I would chuse to name, and in whatever numbers, among all the dead from the beginning of the world to the present time, and command them to answer any questions I should think fit to ask ; with this condition, that my questions must be confined within the compass of the times they lived in. And one thing I might depend upon, that they would certainly tell me truth, for lying was a talent of no use in the lower world. I made my humble acknowledgments to his highness for so great a favour, and forthwith I proposed that William Shakespeare might appear at the head of all his commentators. These were so numerous that some hundreds were forced to attend in the court and outward rooms of the palace.

I had difficulty at first in distinguishing Shakespeare from the crowd, for he was by no means the tallest or the handsomest or even the most poetically featured man among them. Indeed, his complexion was far worse than any of theirs, being spoilt by the constant application of grease-paint and the cosmetics of the actor's trade. What chiefly indicated him was his gait, which was that peculiar to stage-

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players, who do not walk like other men, but are always, as it were, treading the boards, and, as they say in their language, taking the stage. His head was inclined to baldness, and he wore a short tuft on his chin, these being the only points in which I could discern any resemblance to the Stratford bust or to the Droeshout engraving in front of the First Folio, or to the Chandos picture in the National Portrait Gallery. I soon discovered that he was a perfect stranger to the rest of the company, and had never seen or heard of them before. And I had a whisper from a ghost, who shall be nameless, that these commentators always kept in the most distant quarters from their principal in the lower world, through a consciousness of shame and guilt, because they had so horribly misrepresented the meaning of their author to posterity. I introduced several of them to him, and prevailed on him to treat them better than perhaps they deserved, for he soon found they wanted a genius to enter into the spirit of a poet. But he was out of all patience with the account I gave him of the Baconians and the Derbyites and the other heretics, as I presented them to him, and he asked them whether the rest of the tribe were as great dunces as themselves.

Among his editors, who were standing aloof from the mere commentators in a corner, but quarrelling violently among themselves, he singled out Tibbald with a hearty shake of the hand, saying the man was a mighty good guesser, and guessing had ever been

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one of his own dearest pastimes, especially in the genders of French nouns. Upon Tibbald's making bold to ask him if his guess "a'babbed of green fields" was a right one, Shakespeare said he felt sure it must be, marry come up, good Master Tibbald, and turned it off with a Hey, nonny, nonny! But he privately whispered to me that he didn't remember, having scribbled that scene after a night at the "Mermaid" and while the actors were waiting. To Dr. Johnson he paid marked deference, asking him who the pedant in Hierocles was, because he had ever a soft place in his heart for the pedants, and whether Hierocles was a seaport town in Bohemia or the same as Higher Ockles near Wincot where Marian Hacket, the fat alewife, once lived. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "it is not for me to bandy words with my sovereign; otherwise, I would ask you if you would rhyme Pericles with pickles"—which answer utterly confounded Shakespeare, who manifestly did not understand it.

In another corner were the ingenious critics, and among them Maurice Morgann and Coleridge and a learned academic professor of Victorian days, whose peculiarity it was to consider Shakespeare's characters as historical rather than dramatic beings. These critics had been so impressed by Shakespeare's 'creative faculty' that they supposed him to have created real people, who had a life outside his plays. Thus they would ask what Hamlet did before the curtain went up, and would surmise that "doubtless

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in happier days he was a close and constant observer of men and manners," and so on. Shakespeare thanked these ingenious critics with a profound bow, saying that they did him too much honour in supposing his plays to be more than plays and himself to be more than a playwright. To be sure, he might have imagined what his Hamlet's behaviour would have been "in happier days," but, as a matter of fact, he hadn't written his tragedy about those happier days, and they must be pleased to content themselves with what he had written. In any case, he preferred the credit of an artist to that of a biographer. And with that he turned to another group who were busily plying needle and thread in fanciful designs, wherein they were so absorbed as not to notice Shakespeare even when he was close upon them.

"These, sir," I answered his inquiring glance, "are the embroiderers. They work all over your text, filling in the outline with the most elaborate patterns of their own contriving. They tell us more about your characters than you ever knew yourself. They expand your meaning when they think it too simple, and when they find it obscure make it more obscure. In short, you cannot see the wood for *their* trees. Need you be surprised that they do not recognize you as you pass? That is because they have made a fancy figure of you, wholly unlike the original."

But by this time Shakespeare had grown weary

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of his commentators. "I do desire," he whispered to me, "we may be better strangers," and was slipping away on the pretext that he heard the early village cock. Thereupon I pointed out to him that it was yet some hours to dawn, but he only replied, "Via, Goodman Dull," and I believe he departed to find out if there were any "Mermaid" or "Porcupine" or "Elephant" or other such joyous hostelry in Glubbdubrib.

PANTOMIME AND DRAMA

THERE was opened at Oxford a conference on New Ideals in Education, at which the initial address was delivered by Dr. L. P. Jacks, Principal of Manchester College, on "The Philosophy of Freedom." It appeared that the first question which "philosophical educationists" had to solve was one between East and West. The watchword of Western civilization had been government, and government of course was an interference with freedom, whereas the watchword of Eastern civilization had been culture. . . . I think (with all respect) of the burnt-cork humourist, Mr. Frank Tinney, who was wont to take the orchestra-conductor into his confidence. "Ernest," he would say familiarly (whether the conductor's name was Ernest or not) "I'm getting deep." I feel that the Principal of Manchester College is getting deep. That, no doubt, is my fault for not being a philosophical educationist.

But the Principal went on to a topic wherein I feel a little less at sea. "Referring to the drama" (I quote the report of an Oxford Correspondent), "he said its earliest form was pantomime. Words were not spoken, but pieces were simply acted. In a later stage of development drama began to make

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use of speech, but it still remained true to its original form of pantomime." No exception can be taken to that statement, which of course is by no means new. Diderot, who, though not a philosophical educationist, was a man of philosophic mind, was perpetually insisting upon the supreme dramatic importance of pantomime. "My dear master," he wrote to Voltaire after a performance of *Tancred*, "if you could have seen Clairon passing across the stage, her knees bending under her, her eyes closed, her arms falling stiff by her side as if they were dead ; if you heard the cry that she uttered when she perceived Tancred, you would remain more convinced than ever that silence and pantomime have sometimes a pathos that all the resources of speech can never approach." And he tells us how he used to go to the highest seats in the house, thrust his fingers into his ears, and then, to the astonishment of his neighbours, watch the performance with the sharpest interest. "They could not refrain from hazarding questions, to which I answered coldly, 'that everybody had his own way of listening, and that my way was to stop my ears, so as to understand better'—laughing within myself at the talk to which my oddity gave rise, and still more so at the simplicity of some young people who also put their fingers into their ears to hear after my fashion, and were quite astonished that the plan did not succeed."

In short, Diderot realized, like Dr. Jacks, that the

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drama is, above all, something to be acted, and that it is also something to be spoken was a secondary consideration. But hereupon Dr. Jacks introduces a new distinction. "The highest truths of drama lay not in the speaking but in the acting. Truths which could not be spoken could be acted. Nobody would believe the highest truth until somebody had acted it." Here I begin to rub my eyes. Is it the function of dramatic art (or for that matter of any art) to inculcate truths? Truths of course may be inferred from drama or from anything else in the Cosmos. But Dr. Jacks speaks of the "truths of drama" as though it were the prime business of drama to impart truths. Is it not rather to kindle sympathy; "through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions," as Aristotle observed; to work on our feelings, as we should say now; to excite interest? Dr. Jacks seems to be of the same mind as Audrey when she asked Touchstone if "poetical" was a true thing. One would have to go back to the obsolete philosophy of the eighteenth century to match this confusion between æsthetics and ethics, between beauty and higher or lower truths. And the last sentence I have quoted, that nobody would believe the highest truth until somebody had acted it, reveals, I suspect, a still stranger confusion—between acting on the stage and action in real life, between art or the expression of will-less intuitions and fact or the sign of the human will at work. This suspicion is confirmed by what follows.

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“Take out of religion the acting part and leave only the speaking part, and what would it be worth? The acting part was the life.” I suppose that, like a certain divine in “Tom Jones,” when Dr. Jacks says religion he means the Christian religion; Buddhists might consider the question a little differently. (I take leave to instance them, as illustrating that Eastern civilization whose watchword is culture.) Anyhow, what has the acting part of religion to do with the acting of stage-players?

But let Dr. Jacks continue. “Why did Shakespeare put the problem of Hamlet in a play rather than in a philosophical treatise? The answer was that his plays were dealing with one or other of those highest truths which could not be spoken, but could be acted, and which, when acted, were a thousand times more convincing than was talk or argument or reading in an armchair. Duty was among the chief of the highest truths, and could not be spoken, but could be acted.” I confess this passage takes my breath away. Does Dr. Jacks seriously put forward the theory that Shakespeare, finding himself filled with certain truths of high importance, deliberately looked round the various means of imparting truths (philosophical treatises, sermons, the Sisters Three and other branches of learning) and singled out the drama as the best, because it used acting, which is the only way of telling “truths that could not be spoken”? Has it not occurred to him that Shakespeare wrote plays

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because he could, because he liked writing plays, without giving a thought to the truths, higher or lower, that might be inferred from them by people who cared more for such inferences than for the plays as such? That he didn't put the problem of Hamlet into a philosophical treatise for the simple reason that he was Shakespeare and not Bacon? And why this perpetual talk, not merely from Dr. Jacks, but from many others, about the "problem" of Hamlet? That problem has been made by commentators. What Shakespeare made was a play, a drama of dramatic interest, interesting for its story, for its various characters, and, yes, for its speeches. And it was all the product, the expression, of one man's mind, imagining things sometimes as things done and sometimes as things said, as they happened to come to him, and never from any consciously selective principle about higher and lower truths. But, Dr. Jacks may reply, there's a divinity that shapes our ends, the higher and lower truths may be distributed as I've been suggesting, all the same. In which case, I think I cannot do better than observe the discreet silence with which Ernest invariably received Frank's confidence about getting deep.

CABOTINAGE

IN reviewing the Kean play at Drury Lane I mentioned the famous play on the same subject by the elder Dumas, which showed Kean as the most cabotinous of mummers. It is obvious that the real Kean was a *cabotin* of genius, like his great successor Frédérick Lemaître, who represented him in the Dumasian play. Mr. Arthur Shirley dwells less upon this side of his hero's character, preferring to exhibit him as a pattern of the domestic virtues, which is what the good Drury Lane public expects a hero to be. But Kean was a thorough mummer as well as a great artist, and Mr. Shirley has so contrived his play that he must needs, however unwillingly, show us the mummer, while the artist he does not show us at all.

To see the artist, we should have to see him at work, actually playing Shylock on the boards before our eyes ; whereas we are behind the scenes, and only hear the applause of those who are supposed to be seeing him "in front." Thus we have to take the true greatness of Kean on trust—we never experience it for ourselves. And this is inevitable, no doubt, for another actor acting the acting of

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Kean could not hope to thrill the audience as Kean did. If he did he would be another Kean ; you cannot reproduce histrionic genius. You have to be content then with seeing Kean off the boards, and here, with all his domestic virtues, the mummer is not to be concealed. His postures before the village constable, the way in which he hands his wife into the barn, the swagger of his gait, and the exaggerated humility of his bow, are all addressed to an imaginary gallery. That is to say, the tragedian and the man are never quite distinct. Though his tears are real enough, he instinctively dries them with a stage-gesture. His inner consciousness seems to be shaped by the craving for outward manifestation. His talk, whether he is drunk or sober, is a tissue of Shakespearean tags. He plays Harlequin to please his dying child, and at once becomes lost in his part.

All this is no burlesque of the real Kean. Take his letter to the Drury Lane Committee, when they offered him a part he didn't care for :—

Mr. Kean returns to the Committee the character of Joseph Surface, which he has, with surprise and mortification, received this day. Mr. K. wishes submissively to bring to the recollection of the gentlemen that the material service which he has rendered to the establishment over which they preside, has been by peculiar success in the *first walk* of the Drama ; and he will never insult the judgment of a British public, by appearing before them in any other station, but the important one to which they have raised him. He wishes them perfectly to understand that, *whatever is the consequence*, he will not submit to any sacrifice of his talent !

CABOTINAGE

When in America he was elected Chief of the Hurons, it is recorded that—

He took this honour with the greatest seriousness, had magnificent visiting cards printed with his new Indian name, “ Alan-tenaida ”; appeared now and then before his friends in his awe-inspiring Chief’s costume, with bead-fringed mocassins and eagle-plumed headdress, with skins tagged loosely about his person, and large gold rings in his nose and ears; and seriously weighed the question whether he should go back to London or pass the rest of his life as a son of the forest.

It reads like something out of “ Tartarin de Tarascon.” Yet this man was one of the glories of the English stage, to see whom act was “ like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning.”

When the supreme tragedian was also a mummer, it is easy to imagine what the average actors were like. For that matter, the Romantic epoch was an age of *cabotinage*, a pompous, bombastic, attitudinizing age. Byron was not without a tinge of it. George IV. as a Highlander was not a bit less absurd than Kean as a Huron. Sir Thomas Bertram had a little, and Mr. Collins much of it. Traces of it survived in Disraeli’s first novels, and as late as “ Pickwick ” and “ Nicholas Nickleby.” It was even later in France, as the Romantic movement itself was later. Under Louis Philippe it flourished exceedingly. Louis himself was a bit of a *cabotin*. (One might draw up a list of royal and imperial *cabotins*, beginning with Nero and ending with the last Kaiser.) Frédérick Lemaître, the Kean of his time, was also the typical mummer. He is, I fancy, the

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model from whom Flaubert took the great Delmar, the magnificent *cabotin* of *L'Education Sentimentale* :

A drama in which he had played a man of the people who teaches Louis XIV. a lesson and foretells '89 had given him such prominence that they went on incessantly fabricating the same part for him ; and his function, now, consisted in upbraiding the monarchs of all countries. As an English brewer he covered Charles I. with invectives ; as a student of Salamanca he cursed Philip II. ; or as a sentimental father indignantly rated the Pompadour.

Daudet gave another sketch of the type in Delobelle. It may even be found among the *fantoccini*. Dickens in his "Letters from Italy" describes a certain "heavy father" in a troop of puppets who was heavier, more imposingly "noble," in his gestures than any human actor.

What has become of all this *cabotinage*, which could ally itself with the most splendid genius in art and which was so often imitated by the world at large ? Where, as the Principal of King's College lately took occasion to remark, where are the snows of yester-year ? You find it neither on nor off the boards. No actor that I know of speaks Shakespeare in private life, and, indeed, few of them do it accurately on the Shakespearcan stage. I have heard, but do not believe, the stories some actors tell of mummers they have discovered in remote provincial theatres. If there were one in London we should know it, for he would at once be imitated by Mr. George Robey. A few mummers, perhaps, lingered on until the 'sixties, the period of *Trelawny of the*

CABOTINAGE

Wells, with its broken-down tragedian who complained that there were "no speeches" in the Robertsonian drama. Our actors to-day are university graduates, men about town, wits, exquisites, professors; never mummers. In fact, you would never take them for actors at all, except when they are acting—and not always then. I suppose it is the new education. They all come from the O.U.D.S. or the A.D.C. or Girton or the A.D.A. (unless they come, as they mostly seem to be doing just now, from the U.S.A.). Or else it is the *Zeitgeist*. The spirit of the age sets its face against flamboyancy, and mumming was nothing if not flamboyant. I am not sure that the world has gained by the change. With the defect we have also lost the quality. If the pit no longer "rises at" great actors, one reason may be that there are no longer great actors to rise at.

FILMS

WHEN you see some hundreds of Britons, of all sorts and conditions, busy plying their knives and forks at the festive board, with the Prince of Wales and the Lord Mayor "supporting the chair" and an orotund toastmaster riding the whirlwind and directing the storm of cheers, you well know that important business is afoot. The important business on the occasion I speak of was the inauguration of a series of "British Film Weeks" shortly to be held, under the auspices of the British National Film League, throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain. Note the iteration of "British." It has been said that art has no frontiers. But film-production is at present less an art than an industry, a stupendous commercial enterprise, giving employment to millions of people and appealing to many millions more (a thousand millions, the chairman said, all the world over), and commercial enterprise and employment are matters of keen international rivalry. In the film industry, it seems, the Americans have for some time been having it all their own way. This is another of the many onerous legacies of the Great War. When we were busy at war, the Americans, until they also came in, were busy at film-

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making. They got the start and they kept it. But we are slowly, very slowly, overtaking them. Since the war the proportion of British films shown in this country, said the President of the Board of Trade, has risen from 2 per cent. to 15 per cent.; it is still very much less than that in the Empire at large. If the 15 could be converted into 50, employment would be provided for at least 50,000 people. It is the aim of the British National Film League to work for the higher figure. One has no difficulty in understanding how the League has succeeded in securing the blessing of representative men so different as the Heir Apparent, the President of the Board of Trade, and the leader of the Labour Party.

When Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said he was "sick and tired of the foreign film," a great cheer went up. "Foreign" meant "American." He was sick and tired of seeing nothing but pictures of American places, people, manners, customs, and romance. "What nation," he asked, "was richer in romance than our own? The origin of romantic fiction" (a very happy reminder) "was here." It was odd to hear the Labour leader dwelling on romance. I had expected him to dilate on the economic and industrial side of the matter, but not he; it was the romantic, imaginative, spiritual aspect of the films that interested him. He spoke with a depth of feeling and a manifest sincerity that fascinated his audience. One readily understands how he has come to be a leader of men. He has a "sympathetic" personality

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that kindles affection, if that be not too sentimental a word for an eminently manly speaker ; he certainly won the heart of one listener, who had never heard him speak before, and had, in sheer ignorance, anticipated something very different. If *that* is the sort of thing the Labour Party has to show, I must revise some of my views and feelings about it—though I do not pledge myself to vote for it at the next Election.

One of the happiest things in the Prince's speech, which had many, was his playful reference to his own sensations as " a bit of raw material " for the film. This is among the new burdens of high station. Our leading statesmen, I observe, have learned to come up to the camera wreathed in smiles. The leaders of Opposition positively grin, as who should say, " Are we downhearted ? " Lord Balfour and Lord Curzon relax less than most of their juniors. Mr. Baldwin is careful to have his pipe in evidence—I suspect him of keeping a spare one in his pocket, to be lugged out whenever the " operator " appears on the scene. Perhaps the smiles are a little overdone. " She smiles too much," was Mr. Darcy's verdict on the eldest Miss Bennet, and I often feel inclined to say ditto when I see our great personages on the screen. The portraits painted of our statesmen in an earlier—pre-film or rather pre-photographic—age showed them made of sterner stuff. Can you imagine the Earl of Chatham or the Right Hon. William Pitt posing with set smiles ? Some of

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those old fellows almost frighten you with their beetling brows and scowling mugs. It is the onrush of democracy, no doubt, that has wrought the change. A scowling Premier on the films would soon be bundled out of office. Democracy forgets that one may smile and smile, and be a villain. (This remark is not meant for anybody in particular.)

Another happy reference of the Prince's—which, I hope, film producers will mark, learn, and inwardly digest—was to the natural history pictures and their value for the town-dweller. The films have given us an altogether new sense of the beauty and interest of wild birds and beasts. They are not so popular with the great mass of the public as could be wished, simply because they have no "story."

"Story," said an idealist who sat beside me, "is the bane of the film." This, again, was the fault of the Americans, he seemed to think. They were not imaginative enough to leave anything to the imagination, and were for ever repeating the blessed word "continuity"—which means that you must be shown every instant of an action. The hero enters his car, bowls along the road, alights, rushes up the steps, is outside the opening door, then inside it at the moment it is just shutting, etc.; you know the kind of thing and what a bore it is. I asked my neighbour how he would get rid of "story," which, after all, served to connect a series of pictures. It appeared that what he objected to was not story in itself but the silly story. I ventured to remind him

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that the world at large, and not merely the film-world, in that matter was like the Sultanas of the famous Sultan Oulogugbeg in Voltaire's "Zadig." "How can you prefer," asked the sage Sultan, "a heap of stories utterly irrational and which have nothing in them?" The Sultanas answered: "It is just on that very account that we prefer them." My friend the idealist, nevertheless, would have the film give you, for a change, an intellectual story—*e.g.*, the working of a man's mind as shown by the successive and minute changes of his facial expression. And he would have a more intimate connexion between the "pictures" and music—a real blending of the two arts. For this, the pictures would have to show moods rather than actions, and might even be as indefinite, as "unrepresentative," as music itself. It seemed, at any rate, an interesting ideal. It would bear out Pater's forecast that all art was approximating to the condition of music.

OFFICE-BOYS

IF the office-boy's head isn't turned, it won't be the fault of Mr. H. G. Wells. His new story, "The Dream," is all about a promoted office-boy, and you gather from it that office-boys are the salt of the earth. It is easy to understand why Mr. Wells is so popular an author. To begin with, all the office-boys in the kingdom must adore him. And the world in general likes nothing so much as a story of success in life from humble beginnings. Success in life? But that is a vulgar, material thing. And Mr. Wells is an idealist, looking forward to a vastly improved world, some 2,000 years hence, when we shall all run about naked and not ashamed, and "read a book now and then and talk and make love naturally and honestly and do our work and thought and research with well-aired well-fed brains." Example of the research a well-aired brain does: it "had worked almost continuously for the better part of a year upon some very subtle chemical reactions of the nervous cells of the sympathetic system." Such is the entrancing prospect Mr. Wells holds out for you, while he excites subtle reactions in the nervous cells of your sympathetic system by his story of the promoted office-boy.

Don't make the silly mistake of supposing this

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boy to be a high-brow. Two thousand years hence he will be, as a matter of course, for how can brains be well aired unless the brows be high? But here and now, in this vale of tears, he is distinctly not. The foreman or shop-walker—I beg pardon, Assistant-Superintendent on the Editorial Staff of Messrs. Crane and Newberry—saw to that. “You don’t want to know very much,” said the Assistant-Superintendent, “you’re better without it here. Makes you High-Brow. High-Brow goes to tens of thousands, but Crane and Newberry go to hundreds of thousands.” Then the Assistant-Superintendent judiciously qualified his statement in the American idiom: “Not that our brows aren’t rising some in this establishment. Educational and improving, we’re going to be, so far as is consistent with our profits.” Crane and Newberry, it should be explained, were publishers of rubbish for the illiterate millions, and naturally preferred the aid of illiterate office-boys in their enterprise. For the illiterate boys would best know what their fellow-illiterates wanted. This seems a simple point, but it is missed by one of the fortieth-century people, in spite of her well-aired brains. “Why did they want an illiterate youngster like yourself?” she asks. “Surely there were enough learned men at the ancient universities to do all the editing and instructing that was needed!” And she is answered: “The amazing thing is that there weren’t. They produced men enough of a sort, but they weren’t the right sort.”

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For sheer stupidity, I suggest, both question and answer rival anything that could have passed between two imperfectly aired brains of to-day. Surely the amazing thing would be if there were ! If the ancient universities produced men of the right sort to cater for the illiterate millions, when their purpose and tradition have always been to produce men of quite another sort !

The truth is, as I think we shall see, the stupid question and answer have their origin in a violent prejudice of Mr. Wells, a violent prejudice against our ancient universities. Or perhaps I should say that our ancient universities excite reactions in the nervous cells of his unsympathetic system ? After telling us (as something "amazing") that university graduates were found to bungle the particular job now in question—*i.e.*, the preparation and distribution of printed rubbish for the illiterate—he contrasts with their incompetence the splendid competence of his arch-hero, the promoted office-boy. "The promoted office-boy, these new magazine and newspaper people discovered, was brighter and better at the job, comparatively modest and industrious, eager to know things and impart things." (And all this must have seemed the obvious, natural thing to you, needing no demonstration ; for the office-boy typifies the raw material of intelligent humanity, eager to know but as yet knowing nothing, with taste and mind untrained, or rather, trained to coincide with the taste and mind of the other

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illiterates. Obviously and naturally, then, he is the touchstone of the average illiterate taste ; and the very person to cater successfully for it.) Nor is it at all amazing, but simply inevitable, that "the editors of our periodicals, the managers of our part publications, and so forth, were nearly all of the office-boy class, hardly any of them, in the academic sense, educated. But many of them had a sort of educational enthusiasm and all of them a boldness which the men of the old learning lacked. . . ." Enthusiasm and boldness, yes, excellent qualities, and all honour to the office-boy class for displaying them, even in the preparation and distribution of printed rubbish, as Mr. Wells admits it to be. "It," the world, "was choked with printed rubbish," is his own statement of the case.

If he had gone on to say that the university graduates were unfitted for this job just because they were not illiterate, just because their taste and mind had been trained to avoid printed rubbish as the very devil, he would again have been expounding the obvious. But he takes a very different line, and a line which I fear points unmistakably to prejudice. He says, in effect, that the academically trained man was unfit for the rubbish-publishing job because he was unfit for all jobs connected in any way with literature. His so-called education, in short, was a sham. He was only pseudo-educated. "The pseudo-educated man of the older order couldn't teach, couldn't write, couldn't explain." As all

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the schoolboys in England (outside the office-boy class) are being taught by these men of the old order, it is a poor look-out for English education ! Further, " he was pompous and patronizing and prosy ; timid and indistinct in statement, with no sense of the common need or the common quality." And this was, if you please, the result of " the old aristocratic education of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which had picked up its tradition from the Augustan age of Rome." Such is the history (for which I venture to borrow Mr. Wells's word " amazing ") of English education, as seen from the angle of Messrs. Crane and Newberry's office-boy establishment ! Nor has Mr. Wells yet done with the wretched academic man, who is, after all, only " affectedly Grecian." " On the one hand were these office-boy fellows with the intellectual courage and vigour—oh ! of Aristotle and Plato, whatever the quality of their intellectual equipment might be ; on the other, the academic man, affectedly Grecian, like the bought and sold learned man of the days of Roman slavery." This base fellow had all the qualities of " the household slave." Among other vices, " he critized like a slave, sneering and hinting." I rather suspect that little remark shows where the shoe pinches. Well, let me, for once, escape from household slavery, and, without sneering or hinting, say frankly that the stuff I have been quoting seems to me unworthy of Mr. Wells, who ought to be above choking the world with printed rubbish.

MR. BALDWIN'S BRIAR

THERE was a photograph in *The Times* of the new Prime Minister which must have been a comfort to the many readers outside the House of Commons who learnt, for the first time, what he was "like to look at." It is comforting to know that he has "the English look." No "foreigner" ever had that face. Written all over it is what Burke called "the ancient and inbred integrity and good humour of the English people." The slight pucker of the brow and the sceptical smile suggest the protesting compliance of the man who is compelled to come and be photographed—"oh well, if I *must*." The left hand is thrust into the coat-pocket, probably at the photographer's direction. But the right hand is the really significant feature. It holds—or rather, affectionately clutches—a pipe. A common briar pipe with a black mouthpiece, the very pipe that all sensible Englishmen smoke. His boots are sensible, too, thick-soled, and a little muddy. But the pipe is the great thing. It is the human touch. Everybody in the kingdom can understand that pipe and will feel drawn towards its owner. It is a symbol of homeliness, of a philosophic and ruminative temperament, of the wise preference of comfort to luxury

MR. BALDWIN'S BRIAR

and of the *juste milieu* to extremes. In a word, it is the pipe of popularity.

Very few of us can enter into the mind of a Prime Minister. For my part, I humbly confess that all politicians, all Parliament men, are mysteries to me. What they are up to, why and how they do it, more particularly why and how they begin the political life, I shall never be got to understand. I know (for have I not read it a thousand times?) that Mr. Baldwin's great achievement was the conduct of the negotiations with the United States over the Debt. I am grateful (as I am told I should be) to Mr. Baldwin for that achievement. But I can no more picture to myself the working of this process, the details of it, what it actually was like in the doing, than the Man in the Moon. My only consolation for my ignorance and ineptitude is that they must be shared by thousands of my fellow-citizens. Nevertheless, it is a humiliating situation. I find myself in like case at the card-table. I am constitutionally incapable of remembering what trumps are out, and am thereby subject to the animadversions of my partner and the derision of many whom I regard, outside the card-room, as abject idiots. I can only suppose that there are *lacunæ* of this or that sort in the best regulated minds. I once knew an undergraduate who, having to pass an examination in elementary geometry, learnt his Euclid Book I. by heart. As to politics, if they were all Prime Ministers and Cabinets, all

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Burkes and Foxes, and Pitts and Gladstones. I should feel my ignorance more acutely than I do. But when I think of the tagrag and bobtail, the local wire-pullers and tub-thumpers, the retired military men, the fellow in the opposite corner of the railway-compartment who *will* talk about the "country," and other fierce politicians (not to mention one or two average M.P.'s of my acquaintance), I don't mind so much. Edward FitzGerald put a significant postscript to one of his letters to Frederic Tennyson : "Don't write Politics—I agree with you beforehand." I say ditto to E.F.G.

And so most Prime Ministers leave me quite cold. They have their reward, though I do not personally contribute to it. They are followed wherever they go by cheering crowds, they are received in audience by His Majesty, they even write affectionate letters to the Sovereign, as Disraeli did, they become part of the History of England. They furnish topical allusions (generally received with loud groans) to the songs in the Christmas pantomimes. Further, they are said to enjoy the sweets of Power, which must be, I should imagine, an acquired taste. But we know what Mr. Baldwin's genuine taste is. He confessed it a long time ago. He would prefer private life in the country, where he could read the books he wants to read, lead a decent life, and keep pigs. Here again is the human touch. The pipe I have spoken of adds the last stroke to that felicitous picture.

MR. BALDWIN'S BRIAR

The world likes to connect Prime Ministers with some little concrete characteristic fact. We remember Disraeli by his primroses and peacocks, Gladstone by his tree-felling, Melbourne by his contempt for watches ("I always ask my servant the time, and he tells me what he likes"), Wellington by his nose, Pitt by his two bottles of port, and Chatham by his gout. What is the characteristic by which Mr. Lloyd George will be endeared to posterity? I have heard his hobby is singing Welsh hymns; but believe that to be a calumny. Mr. Baldwin has made himself quite safe in advance with history. His briar-pipe settles that. And, after all, it is better so. It might have been pigs! Somehow, the pig has never been honourably connected with man in chronicle or legend. The owl goes with Minerva, the dragon with St. George, the lion with Androcles and St. Mark, but a pig with nobody.

One result of Mr. Baldwin's preference is inevitable. It will affect the tobacco market. It will give a tremendous impetus to pipe-smoking. Briars with black mouthpieces will go up in price. Corona Coronas will come down. I foresee a "new line" in tobacconists' advertisements. Sir James Barrie has hitherto been their mainstay. He will now be superseded by Mr. Baldwin. "Same as supplied to the Prime Minister"; "The Prime Minister's favourite pipe"; "The No. 10, Downing Street, antique briar-root, straight-cut." And now I will go smoke my own.

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